

**1562**

Slaves on your boat  
**Trawling** for greed  
 Crowded as always  
 Wrists bear  
 Chains as their only chattels

Slaves on your boat  
**Rowing** for your gluttony  
 Bodies as property

Slaves on your boat  
**Dying** in captivity  
 A breath for **escape**, one breath too many

Tides lash the ocean  
 for its complicity  
 The clouds darken and howl in humiliation

**1878**

Indentured labourers on your boat  
**Sailing** for Empire  
 Crowded as always  
 Arms carry  
 Saris holding a few possessions

Indentured labourers on your boat  
**Protected** for profit  
 Bodies as commodity

Indentured labourers on your boat  
**Drenched** in servitude  
 A breath for **liberty**, one breath too many

Swells thrash the Kala pani\*  
 for its collusion  
 The moon winces and wanes in disgrace

**2018**

Migrants on a boat  
**Floating** for a better life  
 Crowded as always  
 Hands hold  
 Parcels of belongings

Migrants on a boat  
**Sinking** for sanctuary  
 Bodies as disposable

Migrants on a boat  
**Drowning** for freedom  
 A breath for **safety**, one breath too many

Waves beat the sea  
 for its connivance  
 The sun recoils and dives down in shame

\* *Kala pani* means black waters, referring mainly to the Indian Ocean. By crossing this ocean many Indians feared they would lose their caste, social standing and cultural identity.