

# An Unknown Girl

In the evening bazaar  
studded with neon  
an unknown girl  
is hennaing my hand  
She squeezes a wet brown line  
from a nozzle.  
She is icing my hand,  
which she steadies with hers  
on her satin-peach knee.  
In the evening bazaar  
for a few rupees  
an unknown girl  
is hennaing my hand.  
As a little air catches  
my shadow-stitched kameez  
a peacock spreads its lines  
across my palm.  
Colours leave the street  
float up in balloons.  
Dummies in shop-fronts  
tilt and stare  
with their Western perms.  
Banners for Miss India 1993,  
for curtain cloth  
and sofa cloth  
canopy me.  
I have new brown veins.  
In the evening bazaar  
very deftly  
an unknown girl  
is hennaing my hand.  
I am clinging  
to these firm peacock lines  
like people who cling  
to the sides of a train.  
Now the furious streets  
are hushed.  
I'll scrape off  
the dry brown lines  
before I sleep,  
reveal soft as a snail trail  
the amber bird beneath.  
It will fade in a week.  
When India appears and reappears  
I'll lean across a country  
with my hands outstretched  
longing for the unknown girl  
in the neon bazaar.

**Comment [U1]:** These are repeated 3 times – Divide poem into 3 three sections:

-Girl + Henna process  
-India + Where she is  
-How she wants to stay

Short lines (spontaneous) + No stanzas

-Different = Non western  
-Short time in India  
-Doesn't want to end = No stanzas

It is also a cycle because first words similar to last words – coming and going, process will happen again and again

**Comment [U2]:** Hennaing = trying to adopt Indian culture but it is only temporary, like the henna it won't last

**Comment [U3]:** Enjambment

-Everything is so fast – her time in India is running through her hands  
-So full of energy, it runs over the lines

**Comment [U4]:** "Specifically India" Exotic – represents India, beautiful needs to be explored, opened up, lively and colorful

**Comment [U5]:** Possibly Indians influenced by the west, or Western tourists who look out of place, or mannequins modeling Western clothes which look awkward and don't belong there

**Comment [U6]:** -Artificial

-Fake = 'Miss World' one of the worst examples of western influences  
-Out of place, West is intruding India

**Comment [U7]:** All the things surrounding her represents India. The word "Canopy" suggests how she feels India is protecting her

**Comment [U8]:** 1 sentence – short, definite and imply sense of pride

-Discovered new things as if India is a part of her, in her 'vein'  
-New life in India

**Comment [U9]:** Repetition of "an unknown girl" to emphasize the fact that she is mysterious like India, it also the 'unknown' side of the persona

**Comment [U10]:** Feeling of desperation to hold on

-wants to find out more  
-can't let go

**Comment [U11]:** Simile compared to the people who cling to the train sides, those people usually hold on very tightly because if they let go they would die

**Comment [U12]:** Digging Deeper into "India"

-Scraping pass the surface

**Comment [U13]:** Sibilance = soft, gentle, smooth, time not going fast

**Comment [U14]:** Although she is desperate to hold on to the memories about India, it will still fade because henna suggests that it's temporary, she will not have enough of it

-Tone = Regret

**Comment [U15]:** Begging, Desperate to stay