This talk considers the critical possibilities of the term ‘mother tongue’ (maatraabhasha) as part of Dalit feminist critiques of caste hierarchies and Dalit and non-Dalit patriarchies. It focuses on the works of Anita Bharti and Meena Kandasamy, both Dalit women authors who write in Hindi and English (and sometimes Tamil), respectively, to extend the definition of the vernacular beyond the confines of linguistic and regional specificity, allowing for a feminist reclamation of the term.