

staring at the sun



Poems by
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Explosions of the heart

The horizon is coming near, the birds are flying away from the whispering curses from the killers who paint the roads orange with flame and blood; and the absence of belief nauseates us all, the burning smell of our skin on a stove where dreams are cooked for the dinner table of the devil... if there is an escape then none of us know about it. And on top of it all you say that the journey to understand has just started, that the wars we fight have an end; and even more that I am going to plunge head first into an appreciative water pool of words and clasps. The glow from the base of my spine is separating the world into two and I don't care if it splits me into two, three or more. Humming at the lips of my neck, naked flesh at the precipice of my finger and I believe, oh yes I believe, my soul has no place to rest. So my friends, isn't it enough the man who is on the street asking for a kind donation for a dose of crack, or a bowl of soup, is the reincarnation of all those souls dead before his time; this is our legacy, our punishment for the deeds of pain, death and loss of grip on the rope born from the wombs of our mothers. You say, you want a blue sky, you say you want a grass green with the stories of your children, and you say you want me and my love, but I say, I am going to die right in front of you for reasons I do not know, for reasons that will never end echoing in your ears.

I know

Horizons run closer to me, and my father
is telling me as sweat rolls down in a thunder
of tiredness, that he is a classical father, one who
does not believe in hugging his son, but instead
respecting him. Yes, he is going to give me the tools,
the correct guidance to succeed in life and I am going
to be grateful for him for the rest of my life, that I will
tell my kids about him, that all the shit he is telling me
is the wisdom from his father, and his father got it from
his grandfather who fought in the Syrian war. He knows
me, he knows how I breathe, how I want to succeed, how
I can back-bite, and how I know how to manipulate people
because I am smart and clever. He knows what is best for me,
and so that is why I will not go to America and instead study
in Turkey; he knows what I want. He knows America is a
land of evil, slutty women and the whole place stinks of
long-haired hippies, colorful transvestites and people so high
on drugs that they never come down for death. Turkey will
be good for me and so that is where I will go. I will be thankful
to him later. The horizon is rushing towards me, and father forgive
me, forgive me for saying this but you beat my mother, you
beat my mother and half of what you said was wrong, was wrong,
was prejudiced, was bigoted, but you meant well, that I know,
and I know I am your son, that the hand you used to break my
mothers nose is throbbing right under my wrist, and for that, my
father, my dear father, I know, you are forgiven by me, I know,
you are also the fountain of so much pain that it bleeds to the
bottom of my feet and leaves behind a river of redemption
for the sons who wash their shirts in a last desperate
plunge of release, release and birth.

Burn

We all burn. Redness is behind our eyes, our brows are blackened from the soot and there are no more fleshes to hang on to for comfort. Orangeness engulfs, afternoon rain washes over our wounds, we forget all the loves we promised to hold, there is hell at the bottom of our dreams and the confusion glazes from the eyes of the woman I want to make love to but not really want to, nails my hands to the wall where I sprayed the gasoline. Tell the demons to come here, to the womb where the border between son and lover melts, the freedom to kill your enemy vanishes in the night fog and we are all left wondering where are we going to go tomorrow; which door are we going to open and close and we all burn. Burning for the abandonment of hate licking our genitals, for the graves we dug because that is the only peace we know, the wars where we slit the throats of children, where we pulled out fingers from hands in order for the comfort of heavens to seep into our water so that when we drink we drink the salvation and revenge of our past generations. And we know that this will not end, the embankment upon which we lay down a blanket and look up in the sky is where we will burn ourselves, immolate ourselves into the silence of eternity since that is the only place where we all belong; oh, we all burn for the home occupied by our childhood, the plate of food given to us by our mothers, the quiet corner of our room where we huddled with our shadows and want to lie in a bed with a nakedness reserved for a woman we did not want to know but want to love. So who says we are alive? Oh, who says we are alive when the heat from the floor strips off the varnish from the table we have the painting of the world, etched into the wood with paint made from the ore, brought to the surface by miners who burned the walls of earth. There is not much to be said to a charred cadaver, to this blackened bone who fought for the good of water and rain, for the glory of good and understanding, for the clearness of the love and sex which binds us together, there is not much to be said to the one who is burning, because when you burn, you burn alone and take the whole world to hell with you.

I want

someone to take my neck and see what makes it turn towards the sun roaming aimlessly behind the balcony when it is so pitch black outside that shadows from the flying demons shudder in fear.

Someone has to peer inside that neck, and if possible attach something to it so that what goes on in my head can be displayed on a color monitor, otherwise I am going to explode into a thousand pieces from the bickerings inside my skull which tell me it is ok to feel lost, it is ok to have people die around you because there is a place for them to go, it is ok for you to be angry because anger for the loss of love is valid, it is ok to smash your hands on the wall because it is not your fault you could not bury your father, it is ok to put your tongue on the hot stove since the sister you could not watch grow up and tell her that womanhood is difficult, was beyond exceptions; all these bickerings inside my head like hallucinations gone haywire.

Someone with enough expertise has to be able to say to me, Kerem, Kerem, we are all in this with, there are no experts for this kind of affliction which only effects prophets without a name, but try braying at the moon and it might dull the pain.

I want someone to tell me that, someone whose quietness ebbs at the birth of the morning, one whose heart recedes with the weaning tide of the oceans, one who is prostrate on the living room floor for the lack of oxygen.

I want this madness to go away.

All I can, all I want to see is the shore

I am not going to be able to move the world.
It is heavy with the wet mud congealing in
the arteries of people, and I am fighting my
own battles. The din of the voices inside
my hands is loud but what can I do, when my
hands are not carrying the words of hope,
or of the agony. My hands are just still,
bound at the wrists by the invisible Gabriel,
who came to me last night. I said to him,
I refuse the conversation you are offering
me because I want to go and move the world
and you won't let me just because
I am human. So he gently, condescendingly
tells me, how I will crave for the attention,
how I will forget Mary and her soft whispers,
how I will drown in the dream of becoming a
legend, a man who will be so well known and
respected and revered that he will discard his
own soul for the desire to live in books, in
t.v. documentaries, in the selfishness of his
ego. Gabriel talks to much and I told him that,
to which he bound my wrists, saying the shore
is far away. He is still here, watching me and I scream
to him, I see the shore, I see the shore and
these binds will be torn apart by the
wind that bore you here to me. I scream,
and scream, young virgins from heaven
visiting me, gossiping and giggling about the
view, of how deep I have fallen where the
bottom is not for them to jump into to
help me. So much attention on me
and all I wanted was to move world
saving a couple of lives and showing
people how to live life.
Now no more, the binds on my
wrist have cut well, Gabriel
you can go now, go Gabriel go,
I know what I am,
of what I will never be,
of the silence I will hand to Mary
and ask for a hand
to go and not move the world
but shovel the wet mud from
the lungs of the shore
who breathes heavily
calling my name everyday.

Drive

I have been driving this car without a morning ablution. There is a certain joy in knowing that I am sinning, sinning without control, sinning because the car felt smooth to my touch. My cousin says he does not believe in anything anymore, and when I hear that I want to push my foot way down on the gas, shift to fourth gear and forget what my heart tells me (Kerem, you can't give up on people). The road is inviting me to die on it, to speed so fast on it that the car breaks apart at the seams and the water that was supposed to be used by me for my ablution falling on me as spray from the tires of cars which go by, go by without stopping. The stink of revenge envelopes me when I roll down the window and I have no qualms about running over the bastards who have killed my future; you, you, you. Bloody warmonger, you have ripped through my flesh with your gold-tipped bullets, you have reduced my life to paying the bills and scrambling to get to my sleep so I can seek refuge in my dreams, I am sick of coming to a house that is not my home, I am tired of wanting to help the children when everyday you encase them in ignorance, I am without an anchor. Oh, my bitter hands are unable to reverse the rotation of the earth. Oh, my feet walking on broken glass of windows blown out by your bombs are stopping in their tracks. I am no longer alive, refrains of whys suffocating me, I am going to run you over. I have nothing more to lose, nothing more to gain, nothing more to love, I am going to nail you with this car, yeah asshole, and you thought you were going to get away. It is you and me, it is starting with you and me, and to hell with those who will do the same after us.

Dream

I have fallen out of love.
Two nights ago, I ran after
her leaving Mary behind. She said
come with me and I followed. Maybe
it was the attraction of a new adventure,
or maybe it was the specks of rust on
my eyes and feet, or perhaps because
she was born in the same hot, dry, brutal
womb as I was. It was not Mary's fault that
I ran through sunlit woods trying to catch
another glimpse of her, trying to stretch my
ears for additional words. I found her twice,
in the same timber house with a high ceiling
and thick crossbeams, the sun nakedly visible
from the bay windows, only she slipped away from me
easily, saying follow me and then stepping
out of the door. Mary, is this right of me?

There is a pull on me
for me to follow her,
a desire for another kind of love,
a love that is new, virgin, one
that is not yet gotten. I know it
will not last long, she knows
that too, but we want to taste
the failure of our hearts,
the twisting of arms around
a stranger to whom we said
goodbye long ago. It is
not our fault,

this is the way it just is.
There is no reason for my fall; there
is no point in trying to explain it.
Tomorrow I will fall again Mary.
And this time,
she will watch
and walk away
without saying goodbye
or forgiving me.

Dream

The bus is taking me where Mary is.
I am going away from the noise of a
loud day, a day where I could not find her,
left bruised from the vagaries of
love and life, a day of falls. There are people talking
around me, talking for the sake of latching
onto a somebody they might know tomorrow.
On my left is an old woman who keeps muttering
to herself the reasons why her children left her,
forgotten her womb, and I can't look at her.
In front of me is a man whose back is bent
from lifting bricks and stones, his face cut into
deep lines, his head on his chest. Behind me is a
middle aged man and a woman (with strands of white hair),
both are married and want to leave it all behind, the
boring job, the lumbering meanings of days and nights,
this bus. To my right is a window, and I see reflections
in all directions (but still no her). What am I guilty of?
The road under me is whizzing by me and I know
I can't grab the concrete and make it stop. I remember
in my dream, I could stop and smell the wheeze of the
trees, the snickering of the leaves, and yet I chose
to run after her while Mary was breathing on my arm.
Somewhere in the woods, last night or today, my insides failed
to hold on to naked skin which would not allow
me to sink in deep in a loss of love,
into the demons who want me to drown.
And yet, I am coming closer to Mary.
It is anarchy of my blood and of those I belong
to; we are lost and found by accident which
scares us. No, I don't know why,
but my love is restless and
my shadows are breathless
from the running. I pull the
cord and the sign Stop requested
lights up; rest could be at hand.

Sometimes, even when I know
I have found what I am looking for,
it is not enough. The bus is
slowing down, the stop is here
and this is here where I
have to love and live
blindly
eyes open
loudly
mouth shut
without her.
Today, at six thirteen p.m.,
Mary, I am home,
and ready to arise from my fall.

Hide

hide from the sorrow
don't look at the red stream on the pedestrian walk
can you hear the bullets sing
tell me, where would like to go to get away from all this
I know, I know, it a holocaust with another name

It is at night the heaviness weighs on my collarbone
and I can feel the sky above me creak and break from
the silence of my resignation. The evening news is just
over and I am in mood to go to work tomorrow, again.
At the back of my head I can hear a gun cock and squeeze
real hard on the trigger, squeeze all over again so many times
it seems
I am in one of those movies where my body is flaying and convoluting
in a sea of noise, hate and revenge;
such a deep sea. Everything slows down to slow-motion,
motion of having nothing at all, even sitting on a chair and
saying to myself I can think, I can cry through this one,
I can't it hurts. My right cheek starts to twitch, throat swells up,
music from the wails of loud Pearl Jam and sighs of hundreds of solemn choirs
mix, and mix, and I remember
the burning, hot, dingy, holocaust; spawned by this century
and left to deal with it. Doesn't your head pound? I have a need
for a shelter where flesh is part of the bone,
red is just a color of a rose,
and thirteen year olds can't kill or be killed. Fuck! if that is
such a lot to ask for then
why the hell should I give a damn.

But it doesn't work like for me.
I recognize the limp faces on the television,
I know their names, I want to do something,
for chrissakes something
as the lies and noise keep on humming. Tonight all I can say is

hide from the sorrow
don't look at the red stream on the pedestrian walk
can you hear the bullets sing
hide
tell me, where would like to go to get away from all this
hide
I know, I know, it a holocaust with another name

alive

for Pearl Jam

it is the scream
that rips through your ribs and
shatters the cage inside your head
and you shout because there is nothing
else you can do and why should you
the world around you has collapsed into
a whirling tornado of confusion where
the eye is lost in a blue tear of regret and
lost innocence; and you are tired, tired of the
walking and running, tired of the loss of direction, tired
of the love you lost without question, it is the weariness
of not knowing if people will bury you with pride and
a soft hum of wails of sorrow, I know that, I know because
I am the same as you, deserving more but having to fight
for it until the blood in our fingers congeals and
makes you and me scream and scream and
say to the everybody else that we will not give up and
we will not kill ourselves in desperation, that
we are going to find the fucking meaning of what
all this is about, that the fact we are
losing our vocal chords for the glory of
desiring what is our birthright is what sustains us,
yes, yes, you and I are angry, we are angry because
we are nailed on walls of solitude, sprayed with
hate and separation, yes we are pissed because we
are being forsaken by angels and prophets and by ourselves,
we will scream, we will scream
just to show you and I and everybody else
that we are
alive
alive
and that is what matters to us most.

amazing grace

you are sitting in front of me on this bus
that is taking us somewhere we both have
to go, it is a matter of duties and responsibilities,
a matter of engagement in a life which has slapped us
left and right without remorse, you are right, I
rather be saying fuck it all, get off the bus
and walk to the nearest traffic intersection,
stop the cars and say to all, turn up the music and let us all dance
and rock till our heads explode; that won't happen
tonight will it? your earrings dangle in furtive flirting, and
I know you are thinking why is this guy
looking at me and not giving a damn whether I
look at him or not. I can see your eyes on the dark
window, the lights of houses blurring by, the picture
inside your head reminding you of how you have
grown up and yesterdays' sex with your boyfriend
was just good and not stupendous; you know you
are twenty-something but you will get old and
poets will not look at your neck and want to kiss it
and whisper in your ear, there is no reason for
what I did. Other people in the bus are breathing
wanton morbidity or snippets from television commercials,
all lost to the desire of kisses and getting off this bus
as it moves. You don't shift in your seat, a book is open
on your lap and you are not reading it, it is useless anyway
because you want to write a damn one not read one anymore;
you sit still hoping the regrets that creep and slide over your
feet will not come back, that they will not see you again, that
they will forget you but you know that will not happen,
and in that admittance lies your pain. You want to look
back, tell me that I am crazy for looking at you, you are
scared because I unsettle you, because I want to kiss your
neck once without guilt or words. You don't know me
but I know and that is what makes you want to go to your
room where the walls assure your life will be calm and
worthwhile, that you will be safe no matter what. But I
am telling you, right behind you, we should both get
off this bus, kiss each others necks and go on our
way, unsafe and unclean, with the memory of
being dissidents in a world full of slaves. I look
out and the bus is slowing down to a stop you requested.
You are stopping and I can't join you, I can't stop for you and
you are disappointed as you walk down the breadth of the bus
not looking back, the steps feel uncomfotring, you are leaving
me behind, you have lost the kiss because I will only get off
moving buses at no regular bus stops. This was a chance you
blew and I look straight ahead thinking
we all bleed in different ways.

orgy

Pete wrote to me a week or two ago
and said it was ok for me to give up.
I don't know if I have. It is something I
think about often; Pete knows.
I work for a company to earn a living,
to satisfy a variety of responsibilities,
and for 9-10 hours a day I am not involved
in changing the world. For those hours I am
not shouting for justice, for liberation of soul,
for the glory of being alive. Have I sold out?
I come from work, and I am not writing letters
to my representatives in elected government of how
I think their voting record stinks, I am not preparing
to go to Africa to distribute food to the dying, I am
not thinking of a social theory to elevate the
dignity of life and I am not meditating on grasping
a prophecy for a way to understand my and our existence.
Have I sold out? I want to rest for a year or two, fulfill
my responsibilities, try to get my the imprint of my feet
to withstand the ebb and flow of the ocean tide, I want to
be at peace, I want to read and write, try to understand what
Turkey and Pakistan and America really mean to me, I want
to be at ease for a while. Have I sold out? I don't want to
get defensive and say everyday I think about the destitution of
the people who are a part of my home and that I have escaped
that desperation. I don't want to get angry and say I am preparing
to get some experience so I can do the things I want to do. I don't
want to be jealous and say I want to be a part of a revolution not
for kicks but a way of being. I burn to ashes every time I hit
the alarm clock at 5 o'clock in the morning and see that for
today, tomorrow and the near future I have to separate myself
from the urge to be a savior. It is so hard for me.
And then, on the horizon, in the deepness of the waves of
clouds which are hands that touch me shoulders, I see
for now I have stopped my continuous howling; I have
sold out some.
And that grinds into my ribcage.
I know I have to wait, to be patient.
Just like the myths of an orgy I fantasized
when I was twelve till the time I was eighteen,
it happened but so much differently.
And so it will be the same again.
Pete, we all sell out, we
have to because the choices are so limited.
The trick is to sell the junk you carry
and today and tomorrow and in the near future
there is a yard sale outside my door.

microphone

for Eddie Vedder

I want to huddle over a microphone, my hair
falling across my face, my spine stretched between my
words, and my hands cupping the iron stand for a prayer;
I want to close my eyes and tell the people watching me I have
the answer. I will shiver, bend backwards, my feet planted to the
ground for the lack of courage and say, yesterday I woke from a dream
when the devil said Kerem you can not win over me. Some will
cheer because they will think that it was something really cool
I said and it went through them, some will be quiet as they remember
how bad their sleep was yesterday and there will be some who will say there is a need
for courage and strength. Lights, those white lights which divide my
face into two halves will scorch my cheeks, make them go red,
sweat will collect under my armpits, and I will be muttering to myself
this is one time I will not lie. I have this fear of getting the chance to
talk to devil and succumbing to his evil, a fear born from the pride
of thinking that I am a prophet of my generation, the trembling quaking
under my ankles because what if all I say and all I do is wrong,
or futile or just plain stupid in front of the mike I will
say (and I will believe in it) every morning I hope for the
blood on my hands to wash away with the blue breeze which
curls around me with a aquamarine satin sheet of comfort, every
morning. All those people watching me, waiting for me to
voice their tongues and to answer for all their doubts and fears in
a place, a concert hall, where that night I will collapse in my
own dreams, and words. There is not much else I can
do, except to bare my skies and embrace the raped, the pillaged,
the tortured, the disappeared, the unknown, the wise, the innocent,
from far away. I am one of the witnesses of my generation.

I am scared. But I have the answer to the question of,
what does all this mean. Even with what I have been saying here,
I have the answer because I saw it yesterday when it was
6:30 p.m.; I saw it scrawled on the warm earth outside my apartment.
I will bring my lips close to the metallic flesh.
And I will whisper.
Just be alive.

On the shore of Nietzsche's dreams

Today I want to leave everything behind, steal a worthy boat and sail onto the licking perils of the Atlantic. I don't know how to swim, I don't how to navigate, and I don't know how to locate shore but I still want to go. I am no longer interested in forgiveness, no longer interested in raising the dead, and no longer interested in holding onto love; I believe this is a death wish for which I do not want to die but experience. Can you blame me? The world tastes like a MacDonald's veggie burger and nobody seems to have trouble digesting it except for me. My limbs can not attach me to the earth from which I am detached and the noise of people who are withering away gets louder inside my head. I am sick of working in a rhythmic cycle that circles around me, whirling into a tornado, sucking the frightened air enveloping me, nailing me to the ground and telling me that is the way it is. That will no longer be the way for me for I will spin deeper into the water that is not owned by anyone, I will not look back but ahead into the smattering of the green and blue splitting into a thousand saltwater caresses on a skin bruised for no fault. I am not being pushed over by you or anyone, I am pushing myself over because I want to live and nothing else matters. It is the principle of passion for me; I will not be encaged, I will not suffocate and bleed for a bunch of rules. Some will say I am desperate, some will say I am selfish. They are right and I am entrapped in their cruel judgment. I am leaving not for the glory of any cause. I don't need your help and I don't need your things. I need your love to let me go and have faith in my coming back; I need you to believe in me. And what of the world which is turning red, gurgling red, churning red, coughing up red, sputtering red, being red, that is my red also my red also and I need to go so that I may come back to the red from the blue where the curls will wash me over, the ultraviolet spears will pierce yellow dye into me, the white naked breeze angels will give me orgasm, and the boat will get to the shore where I belong.

Woman

It is the smell of her skin which is absent on the waves of dreams that slither on my arms, dreams carrying the sand of sadness at having forgotten whether I like it or no, family is the weight of dead angels; those angels died under the fresh water laps of regret. But neither angels, or anything else matters right now. It is the absence of her skin which presses my spine closer to my ribs. My words bend and twist, stretching, and every time I try to inhale her breasts my lungs feel crushed, and as I want the curve of her thighs to stay inside my head, my bones, I know it is because they are the last station of comfort under the blue dome of hell. It is an orgasmic want, the desire pulsing at regular intervals, jerking the frames, kicking the core, beating the thoughts, the grand expectance of a rush, that explosion of rush left unfulfilled. Just like the prophecy given to me about the nature of woman, it is a secret which is known to everyone that love will fail at the roar of lust. But I am not thinking of it right now, not because it is not true but because I am waiting to be covered and protected from the illusions which pound my head day after day, illusions that repeatedly scream, we are alone with our lies. She is my savior, and she is far away, not forgetting but wondering why this man born to climb walls has collapsed at her feet, bruised, with all his loves and dreams scattered around him. At her feet I want her, not to save me but to make love to me, to tell me in all my confusion, I will not forget her smell.

Tame

have I become tame.
waterfalls of promise falling over
the edge, the hold on what
used to burn my palms slipping
into the darkness of memories,
am I giving up on that which
gave birth to me: the anger for
a voice for what is right,
my direction is misleading,
the direction of my foot following
blood spilled long ago. where is my
guide, those who were killed
by my resignation, the dejection
seeping into whatever I do, the
depression sticking to whatever I
say, I can't move without saying
to myself I am still so young, have
I given up so quickly, it is the
unbearable heaviness of the largeness
of souls of the world, the enormity of the task,
there must be a way out,
an out into some light; I'm
bound, bound to the fear of dying too
quickly, of not having a couple of hours a
day of comfort, of not having kids
because I was so involved in a
social cause; I think it is the
hunger and sickness which has
made me tame. it is a question of existence,
have I betrayed my destiny,
have I become tame
after so many loud voices,
it must be a temporary numbness,
howls of patience scratch my neck,
ancient wisdom's whispering riddles
which don't make sense to me,
I am rotting inside,
I am falling deeper and deeper into vagueness,
and the riddles grip my eyes,
I can see, I can see the answer
but it does not make sense,
I want to end the struggles,
where is the way to go
I mumble under the distant horizons,
I can't be defeated, not this early in the game,
have I become tame

at this minute I have

stay

there is no knife which cuts water
into two, no separation exists between
the salt and death before one drowns
and so I look at the window ahead me
wanting the knife, that tool of clarity,
searching in my head, words, will my love survive,
it is something revolving and spiraling into a
whorl, and the tempest brews, the breasts
I kissed this morning receding into memory,
serenity drip dripping away,
then speech coming from my throat
not by request but by demand,
sucked up by the vacuum of fragmented
souls which reside and eat off the flesh,
speech making your tongue stick to the
roof of your mouth and then impulsively
separate with a silent vengeance,
stay
I know
for the sake of God
stay
I know

Awash

for Mary

It is as if the root of all the trees
started to think that my chest is
the earth for the birth of their
dreams, the color green bleeding and oozing
over my nipples, the brown fragrance
of bark splitting through my navel,
the yellow remnant of dying leaves covering
my neck, I am awash in a forest
that you and I have started to call love.
You do remember when we argued,
my voice turned into a dark sinister
crow, my hands gripped my legs
in anger, my vision blazing holes on
the walls where our love
was bouncing in a narcotic confusion;
I am awash in that and what comes after:
the collapse into arms, the melting of skin
into skin, the dripping of tongues into
mouths as we smell each other, the panic driven
scratching at explanations, the dissolution of
today into tomorrow. We have created stories
and I hate when our sentences crumble,
and we are more animalistic than animals.
Believe me Mary, being awash in you, by you,
is not easy.

Pulp Fiction

Nothing really makes sense anymore
to me and that is okay by me.
I am not interested in why
the world has become a car
going round and round, circling so fast
that it is breaking apart at its seams. I
want to be surprised, to be titillated, to be
a witness to eccentric, quirky conversations
which starts with a kiss
by a stranger and ends with a
line like, You know, I am not
out to save the fucking world
If there is a reason to live, I want
it to be captured in a
head banging, shouting, cathartic
song which I can bellow out
while watching a movie that hits me
with a hand of images
and emotion that when I sit
on my chair at home I see
my shirt is soaked with blood
and anger and passion. That is
what I want to eat; passion.
Fuck the job, fuck the future,
I want to chew on passion
and go high on it, sporting it
till my nose drops off. If there
is an adventure, I am game, the
tell tale battle of good and evil
be screwed, the adventure I want
to be a part of has to be a whorl of
disconnected happenings
held together by one and only one
desire. I don't want
to see you shoving morality
and meaning into the milk of my breakfast cereal bowl,
I have given up on them. I pray but it
is on my terms. I kill but it is done in
secret. I want
the passion to be of something
new, not of the old pedantic
bullshit which has choked
us to starvation. It has to
be passion of life, of being
alive and no more. I mean it,
no more. I will be no
part of it and I am not going
to fucking save the world either.

Lapiz Lazuli

for Charles Bukowski

Sometimes, after I come from work, I want to hang upside down
from the ceiling in my
apartment. I want to grab onto
that blood rush. The other day
I am driving from work and
singing at the top of my lungs,
my other colleagues on the road
thinking why is this madman
not realizing he looks like an
utter fool. I say to myself,
screw them, it is my car, my music,
my space, and it is something
to kill the boredom; I hate
to see asphalt pass under me
without recognizing my presence,
my life; the asphalt will not
hypnotize me. But I want
that blood rush bad. All
the confusions of the day will
coalesce from my feet onwards
and ram into the walls of my head,
disintegrating into little frothing bubbles
of laughter. It is a small
thing to ask. A small rush, a
tiny addiction. The only way to
keep the hovering gargoyles of hell at bay.

Passion on a day when it all seems dark

for Mira Celikol

Sometimes, when you are watching the sculpture
you created of your daughter, the one that is curved
the shape of the wave which destroyed Atlantis,
you wonder, is she going to get old the same way
you did. The light is shining from the window,
onto the dining room table, the phone is silent,
your husband is still sleeping, there is this singular
time after a long while when you can cradle your
head in your hands and believe the gods above be
fucked, life will explode in your glory tomorrow.
I know, I know that behind the collage of your arteries,
you remember the dreams you are having for the last
couple of days of how you belong to the streets and
collective memories of Toronto, of how under the
city you grew up in and would like to die in, runs the
smell of the Volga. And in the dream, now by the
dining room table, you can see the horsemen in their
cloaks riding up to you, beckoning to you and saying, you can come
back to them as their rightful chieftain. Your black hair falls
over your face, the glass of water in front of you
holding all the words you have never said to
anybody, you are dissolving into songs of
womanhood and fertility, the songs to which
you danced naked. Your mind is made up, today you are
going to immolate yourself and have your ashes
wrap the world in a blanket of desire and longing
and comfort for the souls who have burnt into the darkness
you will not sell yourself to. You are massaging your
eyes, they hurt from the pain of seeing so many people
kill, mutilate, dismember so many other people,
but you are not going to succumb,
not today. You have staked your claim,
the ache in your bones is absent,
you hear whispers of how your blood is immortal,
the ghost of your grandmother approves of the
way you knead the bread,
fear of drowning away from the grasp of hands that
belong to the ones you love has disappeared,
you are going to live today,
even though through the sounds of the waves, the
hooves, the cars, the chatter, the wails of the bleeding
world reaches your ears.
You know exactly what this is all about, Mira.
You know exactly the name of this, Mira.
Passion.

Slaughter

I am not going to be human with you anymore. It is no longer a question of education or culture or divinity. I am going to take you and tear your clothes off and tie you to a chair, naked, your buttocks resting on cold wood, your muscles aching a bit from the ropes. Then I am going to take my clothes off, take a set of pliers and pull your nails from the roots of your fingers, one by one. You see, I don't care about ethics, God, redemption, or sense or anything. I just want to torture you. I will then cut off your ear, your tongue and glue your eyelids shut. I will pass hundreds of volts through your testicles, keep you hungry for three days and then I will break your ribs with a hammer. By now you will be screaming for mercy and at that time I will pass a bullet through your left knee cap and break your right arm. If you faint I will wait till you become conscious. I am going to reduce you to clay, bit by bit, piece by piece. I will slaughter you slowly and at the end of it all, after I make you swallow rat poison while I am reading you a list of how many you have killed,

I will carve on your chest with a sharp kitchen knife, for the dead.

You bastard, you warmonger, power fucker, I will give up my humanity to restore the ones you took, I swear it and to hell with everything else.

Black

Couple of days ago I started
to wonder what would
I do if I got cancer;
I would give up.
My hands will turn bitter,
and all the desires I ever had
will melt into the concrete
sidewalks outside.
I will give up,
ask for death
and in pain watch
tv till I waste away.
This is not going to be
a dream, not something
I am going to escape from,
fuck that,
all the whys will dissolve
all the hows will evaporate
and I am going to
write nothing
embrace the darknesses,
wallow in the depths of self pity,
this will be the final frontier
the final straw,
I will be on the verge of
the last push,
slip and slide away into
the black of cancer
flipping a finger at hope
and the beckoning angels,
fuck them all.
But one thing I am
not going to do
is cry.

Yesterday

for Humaira Shams

Yesterday, over the phone, I talked to you,
your last name different and the breeze in Rawalpindi
nothing like the brown restless hot howl of hell blowing
across Karachi. I wanted to hold you, and tell you that our
innocences have been trampled,
our desires have been reborn elsewhere, and
I still remember how I loved you. The words
trickle down the throat, and I am
thinking to myself how love changes over
the years, how we have collapsed into dust and
risen again so far away from each other.
I am looking right at and through the window,
trying to believe that when I jump, my memories
will survive my fall, memories which belong
to our children. And lovers. The falls belongs to me alone.
Ten years ago I wanted to melt
into the breath of your skin
and coagulate into explosions of love under
your veins; all that undone and so much left
unsaid. And now, look at us, our souls
gifted to another, our flesh licked
over by another; doesn't the
damning reverberations and clanging of
what ifs disturb you at night. It is not
obsession, it is not a lovers love anymore, but
the wailings of holding on, grabbing onto
what keeps our bones glued together,
making us kneel at the time of day everyday when spirits
of dead people whisper into our ear,
the people you were born with hold
the key to your reincarnation after death.
You are the key, and every piece of you
makes you kneel and hurt at the knees because
it hurts so much to love another over the phone,
on letter paper, in conversations of casual acquaintances.
But you know we will never let go because
the precipice is at the edge of the door of your
living room, the ground is slippery from
the tears we said we would not cry.
It is hard to be human, to not be a demon.
Yesterday, after I talked to you, over the phone,
I rested
and told the devil to fuck off.

vagina

this is what he did:
he covered the iron rod
which he found lying on
the floor beside the corner
of where the walls met
with the fire from the
stove where he had his
food cooked
and he shoved it
through his wife's
vagina
through womb
through flesh
through love
because he was angry at her
let me say again what he did:
he shoved a glowing, red & orange,
hot, wild, uncaged, inhuman
rod
into, through,
his wife's
vagina

how the horror
drips into my senses

I have forsaken you.

whore

for the last three days
I have thought about how I had wanted
to make love
to a whore
for a reasonable price;
the reasons I don't know.
I bought a weekly for 75 cents
which was for gentlemen only.
I read it thoroughly. Some services
were available for
free, just for pleasure, while there
were some that were priced
suitably for an afternoon, or a night,
or ½ hour or a full hour of
unforgettable experiences. Several
women were asking for \$150 and above
for an hour while others
were honest enough to ask for
generous men only. There
were a lot of pictures to which
I fantasized to.
To which I sold myself to.
These women could and would
do anything; they could wrap their tongues around you,
enslave you,
massage you,
do it in any position you want,
anywhere you want,
the varieties were endless.
And for the really brave
there were transsexuals with
9 inch cocks for dual pleasure.
Breasts, cunts, thighs, lips
all were mixed in together
in all possible combinations, all possible type and sizes,
and so I fantasized.
What if I did do it?
I did not need to and would not tell
anyone,
it could be my private secret,
a little orgasmic secret.
I just wanted to see
what it would be like to
fuck a whore
pay up
and leave it at that
it would be a walk on the edge
risk it all
love and all
all, all for a blast of one wanton
ejaculation. I did not fuck a whore and today I am not interested. But I feel like one.

it's not going well is it?

it is not going well, is it
you can't do anything
you feel fat and heavy
the world does not make sense
what you want is a mystery
to you
the day is a serpent licking you
with its forked tongue
nights are a vortex sucking
your blood from your veins
you are not alive anymore
are you?
what your lover says feels useless
is useless
the flesh on your bones
is a runaway train of self hate
you hate yourself, don't you,
shivers grab you,
hopelessness licks your genitals
you are spinning, spinning on
a one way fall onto a bed
of nothing
that feels like as if someone took
a knife and shoved it up
your ribcage and you
just smiled
you can't die, can you?
the energy isn't there
this is not going to end soon, it?
there is fear
but you can't even see it
the only thing you can smell
is that you are alone
voices don't matter
kisses are pointless
do you even love anyone anymore
there is no one even to blame
there is no one to help
you didn't have dream yesterday
holy fuck,
you are drifting away
aren't you
and you know what
I can't do shit about it.

tomorrow will come

when you look down below
from the window seat 26A,
from behind two glass pressurized panes,
you are thinking
the world is so big
that you will never see it all
and all of it will
never know you.
then ten million other things
rush into you
with a bullet impact of blue
and blue
and you find
you are telling yourself
tomorrow, there will
be a tomorrow
without the demons.

nirvana

Kurt, have you made it to nirvana?
are there lakes of fire with a cool blue
breeze blowing over making your long
blonde hair curl around your forehead?
c'mon Kurt, tell me,
has the scar on the side of your
head disappeared,
have the red blotches on your jeans
and shirt been washed by the
kisses of angels
in armor.
you know, Kurt, people are
killing each other down here,
are they up there also.
I have to know
for my sanity.
behind my eyes
is a black cancer of
faithlessness,
my voice has collapsed
into whispers,
I have lost my passion,
tell me Kurt, did you
show the finger to
that bastard who sits
in silent pain, did you show
the finger to the bitch
who has
given birth to us
and left us alone,
did you show the finger.
I have been raped Kurt,
my hymen has been ripped
and not by strangers,
my skin has melted into a
plastic stream of
unwanted tears.
is there a river there
where you can float
naked
unborn
not dead.
are there any more prophets or revelations
on the way.
do you want me
to go on being alive.
fuck.
fuck.
fuck.

father

I remembered my father
again
found my last letter to him
unread
the waters in which he drowned haven flown off
a cliff
not touching the edge of the paper on which
I wrote
funny, I thought, how his absence drenches my life
and my mothers
her hand pressing on my shoulder, her soul weighing
on mine
the sorrow of not telling him how he hurt us
dripping
in rivulets of regret into our veins, his face in
old photographs
saying to me, this is the way you are going to
get old
and I know he is somewhat right

once again I am wounded, drifting onto a shore
I left behind long ago, the redness of my blood tracing
the outline of my glide across prayers and conversations,
this never ending tug at the edges of my life,
all those words that were never spoken
lying unused and forgotten on the desert where
the ruins of Mohenjedaro blink at the appearance
of archeologists

you know, it is sometimes just too hard to
let it be

on those days when you return to be under the sky
where
he was your father.

deaf

I want to write something
that will
destroy us all
I want to become evil incarnate
and shred the
souls of everyone
into thin fibers
of agony
I am not going to be
a model of mercy
I am not going to sit
down and try to
understand
and be at peace
I am not going to think of
blue water and
green grass
and yellow sun
because I am black
and void
there is a limit
to everything
even wisdom
and love
I am at the limit
I have crossed the limit
I am on the other side
I am now deaf
your tongues are useless
there will be no remorse
no repentance
no fall
no memories
I am not going to fear
anyone
I am the authority
there is one single reason for this:
today, under order from local businessmen, the recipient of
a prestigious human rights award, an eleven year old Pakistani boy,
one who had been a child laborer all his life, one who
spoke up to become free, to be alive,
was strangled till the last words of his mouth were
please don't do this to me.
remember, there is one single reason for this:

an eleven year old boy was tortured, beaten and made
to taste, lick, eat, digest fear
death
and the price of voice
I am naked, I am red with Abdul's blood, I am an animal, I am God,
I am deaf
and I am your end

somebody bombed Agha's Supermarket

in karachi
there is no hell
just the fires that burn
after the bomb
explodes
and leaves all the memories
in pieces
over the asphalt
in the parking lot
under the gaze
of the eyes
of the shoppers
and me
there is really
no one
responsible
is there
all of us
did it
bombed it to pieces
together with all the
memories
of my life
of your life
because we hate
remember the word
hate
hated
each other
but and I both know
we will continue on
in other aisles
under different gazes
because
bombs are like ejaculations
of sperm
born from the titillation of rape
it is all about
power
and
penetration

violation

this is a fear
that bubbles in my head
somebody is going to
violate
her
do her
like an animal
and I am not going
to be able
to even ask
for revenge
I see the images
broken into 1/24 second
frames
in color
the way her mind
wants to escape
tries
the hands that feel
her
the movement of her
eyes
reflecting off mine
the swoosh
of death
breezing by behind my ears
her breasts
red with her blood
his laughing
his fist pounding
and pounding
his hips pounding
and pounding
I see her naked
screaming
the images are not going to stop are they, are they, the images are not going
to stop
until
I get up
and holy someone,
help me before I do this
I get up
and violate him

we have all become animals

underwear conversation

true story, something that happened to me at the gym:
after my workout as I was standing in my underwear
starting to put on my shirt,
socks on my feet,
some guy on his way out,
stops short and
turn around to face me and say,
are you a Christian?

No, I am not.

I am a Muslim.

Oh, I see he replies a little disappointed.

There is a question on his face.

I want to help him out, so I say,
I went to a Catholic university for
four years so I am quite familiar with
the Christian tradition. Why do you ask?

Because, I knew that

you need the Lord's help. Otherwise,
you are destined for hell. You are an
unbeliever and I want to urge you to
follow in the Lord's footsteps and embrace
the Bible.

Aha, I say to myself, this could be a
good discussion, and that in my underwear.

But, just as you are a member of a faith that is
born of a different tradition than mine and is entitled
to a way of belief, I am too.

Yeah, but you don't have the resurrection of
Christ or the concept of redemption, or that
Jesus is the Son of God and that he died
for all our sins.

True, for me and my tradition he was just a prophet
How are you going to get to heaven?

Good deeds, I hope, otherwise I guess I am screwed.

Just good deeds will not get you to heaven,
you have to embrace the holy Bible.

Thanks for the suggestion but I am not
interested I responded, realizing I have
still not buttoned my shirt. I proceed to button.

He says, Please I urge you, for your own sake,
read the Bible. When I was in the Air Force, I was just like
you and then I realized the error of my ways because my roommate
said, do you know God? I couldn't answer then but I can now.

Thanks. But I think our God is the same anyway,
whether we know Him or not, is not that important.

I feel sorry for you, but please, remember what I said, he said as he left.
And then I thought to myself,
buddy, five hundred years ago, when your religion kissing
the ass of the Ottoman Empire, I would have chopped your head off.
I then, put on my pants and went back to work.

ice cubes, water and whiskey

my father liked to have his whiskey
in his regular glass with ¼ water,
three ice cubes and the rest
with whiskey when he came back from work everyday.
Always drank three to four glasses every night
and never got up to make the drink himself.
It was, Kerem!
and when I rushed down from
my bedroom
leaving whatever I was doing behind
he would say,
Can you bring me a glass of whiskey

I never questioned it. He did not question
my expertise at mixing it exactly the way
he wanted it.
He always thanked me,
sometimes smiled.
I did this for six years,
day after day,
only interrupted once for a

stretch of four weeks in 1985
when I was preparing for exams.
I saw him when he was drunk also,
worried when he drove us when
he was drunk,

and always had to nod my head in agreement and approval
when he told me,
Kerem, it will be matter of honor
for you when you will have a drink
with me when you become a man. You
will ask me for my permission and I will grant it.
I thought at that time two things:
1) I hate this;
2) I can't wait to drink with him and tell him how I hated making his drink.

My father died in a bus accident in 1991
and I never got around to telling him anything
because he thought
I was a drunkard in America
and had disowned me
after I told him I was not sorry for leaving
for America to get an education.
I never drank with him.
Never had the honor.
Till 1991 I had not touched a drop of alcohol.
Nowadays, in 1995, with friends
I will indulge a bit.
But I won't touch whiskey.

did you see the orange flame across the sky, yesterday?

yesterday, I did not believe in anything.
the day past me
covering my gaze
as if the gyrations that were
taking place in the orbits
of my skull
offended the sky.
what do you do when the passion
you have for the woman you love
for the words you speak
for the breath you take
is no more?
when the whispers
of how passion is dead
lie calmly in the azure waters of your soul
I begin to wander
can I ever become pregnant with a
world so fantastical that
every morning starts with a different kind of orgasm.
this grayness, this constant tepidness,
eats me alive
and I am left begging
for someone to claw across the sky
with their nails a tear through
which orange flames of the universe
sing our skins.
I say to myself
there has to be a way to
break through,
but the television is still on and it blares inanities.
I say to Mary
I am not in a conversant mood,
the book I want to dissolve into
still open and empty.
if there are desires
I had wanted last week,
yesterday there were none.
death did not frighten me,
all the evil in our lives
left on the kitchen table waiting to be acknowledged.

and around me I know
people are being no more
because of passion
or lack of it;
and I am caught in the middle of it all.
the only thing I fed on was the yellowish decaying silence,
the heavy mist of unspoken words gestating
and then aborting into wailing songs;
today, it is a little different...
there is a tinge of vermillion on the horizon.

it isn't you

it has nothing to do with you
it is me
the colors under my flesh turn into shades of
blue and black, tinges of red and light pink,
the absence of lies oozes from the hidden
pores on the back of my hands
and all I am thinking about
is how I have lost my love for you
it must be the animal in me
I don't know why
my love has disappeared like the shadows of my conscience
but there is this undeniable push to
run away and start again
all over the fuck again
with someone else
it must be the animal in me
demon seed
may be it is the thirst for variety
may be it is the quest for excitement
but you know and I know
this tumble towards a cosmic self-destruction
is nothing more than the blackness in my heart
the blackness of wanting to get whatever I desire,
getting the better of me.
it could be that I don't want to get old, with you or anybody else, it could be that the
blindness which licks my eyeballs is born from the incompleteness of my soul, perhaps
when the night wrapped itself around me the secrets that I could tell no one drowned in me
so deep that I have lost my anchor, don't get me wrong, I want to belong to you, I want to
be held in your arms but the poison of being
free
and you may ask, free from what,
needles itself like heroin into my blood veins.
it isn't you,
it is the world that is
collapsing
and I don't want to collapse with it
holding onto
the hypocrisy of I would not mind being rich
and help people on the side like a sick hobby
I am slipping under the
choices I have to make,
the water that I drank yesterday already evaporated
from the highways of my soul,
the agony of it all
and the only thing I can do
is to scream in silence from the hurt
and wait for the new tomorrow
when I will disavow all revolutions and desires
and blackness.

refugee

my home isn't anywhere
what I possess is with me
the food I eat much lesser than yours
and people who speak to me are
all strangers to the heart and mind
shelter is a luxury
and hunger an excuse for prayer
and salvation;
I am not about to give thanks
or apologize,
but listen to me,

I am a refugee,
displaced and misplaced,
defiled and destroyed,
enslaved and forgotten,
swallowed and spitted,
don't tell me you are sorry,

don't tell me you will try to help me,
sit down here
with me, smell me,
absorb me,
live the stench of my life

and say aloud
our children will have their own graves to die in
and say aloud, live the stench of my life,
absorb me, be with me, smell me,
sit down here, don't tell me you will try to help me,
don't tell me you are sorry, I have been swallowed and spitted,
defiled and destroyed, displaced and misplaced, I am a refugee,
but listen to me, I will not apologize, I am not about to give thanks
and salvation; my hunger is an excuse for your prayer, your shelter is a luxury,
tomorrow in the recesses of memory all of us will become strangers to the heart and mind
and people who speak to me will be reborn
but remember
the food I eat much lesser than yours
what I possess is with me
my home isn't anywhere
I blame you
and myself
because remember
I am refugee of body
you are a refugee of spirit
both of us refugees of soul.

pablo's ocean, pablo's sky

for Mary

let me tell you a true story:
a long time ago when the world had
just been born from the womb of our mother,
there were no oceans and sky,
a poet named pablo came up to the devil and said,
give the world some water
and air.
the devil said why are you asking me?
the poet said, my father is busy.
a smile licked the face of the devil and he said,
for the water and air what will you give me
to which the poet said
I will give you all my words.
the devil, one who had never spoken or written eloquently
accepted
and gave the world the ocean and the sky at the dawn of the next day.
in the morning when the poet woke up
he was dumb and crippled in the hands;
he went outside and saw the blue ocean
the blue sky
walked up to the house of the devil;
the devil wasn't anywhere...
he went behind to the garden where the fig trees were
and he saw the devil in mortal agony
doubled over, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth,
eyes rolling over, skin wasting away from his skin,
the devil moaned, you killed me.
that was the last words he spoke.
the poet smiled,
walked back to the ocean,
dived in
floated away face up
and disappeared.
that is why on days when the sun clasps the
ocean and sky together to breath forth the secrets
of all of us and all of everything,
you will see the waves
curl up and not crash,
the air will rise and not abate,
and you will hear a voice say
this is your ocean
this is your sky
and the devil has been dead for a very long time.

if I could

if I could tell you
I would
it is these acetylene choices
I have had to make
the redness of the days past
when the desires
that seeped into the dank crevasses
of myself
told me
go ahead, just go ahead
and do it,
veil it, shape it, lie for it,

believe in it
and don't worry about the rest.

if I could
I would
banish to nothingness
that part of me
which wants to
go high on wanton desires
go whoring on lonely adventures

if I could
I would
ask you to forgive me
to hold me and tell me
that these are momentary lapses of existing
that there is a certainty
of love and soul

if I could
I would
judge the men who kill
and take revenge for what they do
pay my dues later
forget the mysteries that surround me
live in a fantasy

if I could
I would
sacrifice my life
for a greater good
that will make me famous and
alive for the next hundred thousand years
but looking at all I have said so far
that is not going to happen.

evil

jesus, does it stick to my soul,
the filth of humankind
it is that evil that licks
my insides, it feels so good,
tell me, tell me, does it
titillate you,
does it excite you

abhorrent, red and black,
void of everything and
anything
this evil, think of it,
to which savannas in heaven
does it lead to,
think of it, can you do it,
what is stopping you,
come with me, forget
what you are leaving behind,
there must be something inside
you that wants to
come towards me
kiss me
open the lips that will swallow me
enrage me
open the heart that will befriend me
it is going to shatter you
it is going to bring you to the edge
it is going to erase your world
but oh, how, how,
it will make you
evil
and whole again
under the bedroom dreams of
the people who forsake you,
people who are anesthetized into
numbness
watching television,
you on the other hand

will taste
hell
while
heaven waits.

tell me your history

I saw you fall down
not in slow motion
not in a glory of life gone dead
just down
unexpected
and without much respect
your history
strewn on the iron floors and walls
of the city that gives birth
to more of your deaths
than we could ever have even
dreamed of;
I saw you fall because
I had to see this part of myself
that wants to rush to you and
pump your heart in that exact rhythmic staccato
drum beat that the American Red Cross
tells in its brochures...
you know, your eyes are
wide open wondering where is that
hole on your body that is there but
which you cannot feel; I am wondering
if a bag of crack is lying somewhere around
because I don't want the cops to find it
and blame your death on a drug-related
incident. god dammit, you are my son
and it was a bullet that killed you not
some bag of crack. you are looking at me
wanting to know if I am going to spend the
rest of my life trying to bring to justice the
hyenas that gunned you down and I am saying to you,
no son, I am not going to. your chest is not
heaving, the sneakers have relinquished their
grasp on the concrete, and the waves of
sorrow and lament that crash and burn
on our living rooms through our windows,
is about to wash me to the shore of hatred.
it is my hatred for poverty and ignorance
and it is on that shore I am going to grieve.
the red and blue lights scare even the
angels away, the stroboscope colors bleeding
into the sirens and loud whispers, you and I,
there together for one last time,
tell me your history son,
and I will tell you mine.

cruxifiction

I see your blood is dirty
with the virus
Mr. HIV.
it got there by
escaping through
the guards that
defend your body.
Mr. HIV is a mad
person, does not like
other people.
he makes you feel sick
and weak.
we have medicines
that will fight Mr. HIV
but we don't know
if we are going to win,
so you have to be strong.
Mr. HIV is scared of
strong people because
he is afraid of the light
and people who are strong
always give off light.
I don't know why only your
blood is dirty
and not that of your friends;
you and I are not going to worry
about explanations.
tell me, have you had any
bad dreams recently?
I have.
I know you are not
scared,
you are brave

your child has AIDS
because this world is cruel.
there is nothing I can do.
be with your child till death
and never forget and allow others to forget.

womyn in a blue dress

it is the loneliness of
being in love
that grabs you by the collar
of your blue spine and makes
you
think that nothing in this
world makes sense;
all those memories you had of
the times when you were
a kid
rushing back in torrents
of time and
space
and you are left wondering
how much longer
are you going to be in love
are you meant to
be in
love
all these questions infesting
that core of your
soul and
being (or whatever that is).
tell me, tell me,
when you want to be alone
alone enough to
open up your chest
and look under your ribcage
tell me, what do you see...
it is this war, this constant tear
of flesh, this continuing conversation
of who am I, who am I with,
where am I going, where will
I veer away from the path
chosen for me
chosen by myself
nothing, nothing is constant
is the echo I am hearing in my
hands
and feets
the wind and sun rising
over the horizon of my shoulder
and I am saying to myself,
kerem, kerem, have faith,
you will not fall out of love
you will not fall over the edge of
loneliness,
kerem, you will not lose yourself.

confessions made high on doses of adrenaline

I am human
is something I have to remind
myself
tomorrow
I am tired of all
this wondering
in search of concrete
guarantees
that my life is going
to mean something
to the world
and to Mary;
I am tired of being scared
that I am not going to be in
love with Mary
or with anything
after forty years;
and my insides are crumbling
with the yellow sun
and turquoise water
dripping over my flesh
because
the sadness of the people affects
me
there is something bigger
than all of us
and I can not grab onto it.
when the angels came to visit me
I told them I was
a liar
greedy
selfish
dark
and had delusions
of people worshipping my existence,
all they said was
live
and so I am running in my maze
of which I don't want to be an exercise in futility
I want that rush
that outburst
that exhilaration
of expressing that core, fundamental, essential, divine
reason/emotion
of what it is to be human

somewhere in my soul my anchor is floating

heavens' last stand

maybe it is the fact
they are innocent
has something to do with
children having AIDS
children crippled from the neck down

it forces us to be more than we ever could be
(transcendence, divinity, etc.)
at a price

I don't want to be more than I ever could be
for that price.

I remember Dali today

you know, sometimes the fire inside your head blazes all over onto your skin, the flesh melts and all you are left thinking, why does the world have to be so cruel. do you want to let it go, do you want to go, leave the rope hanging by the side of the road, remember the way your mother said goodbye to you when you became an adult, and so you remember why did you ever fall in love in the first place, the memories of all those days past retreating into the recesses in your head where the soul is absent; yeah, tell me about your soul, how it is tormented because you are displaced, you are a refugee, you are without a home and yet, and yet, you are still in love, inside that head of yours you are contemplating how is it possible for you not to be greedy, how is it possible for you to reach the voice of Siddharta, and the weariness seeps like wet, unwelcome rain into your shoes, the idea of changing your universe, the universe for the better is revolting, the sense of loss is overbearing, and I know you are asking yourself what is that I have lost? I have lost my innocence, I have lost my compass, I have lost my courage, I have lost my ability to see, I am tired.

Yet, I continue to pretend to know things.

The pretense
condenses on everything I touch.

All this a cruel, cyclic
self-flagellation
for

being me. It does not make sense, does it?

Conversations, poems, novels, kisses, the contents of days, the contents of nights, through my
myopia, I know I have heard this ranting and raving before, there
is a purpose behind it. It is well-intentioned.

All this ranting and raving
is a plea for a way to happiness,
a plea not to be tired.

matador

how long does the battery last on your wheelchair?
do the wheels lock when you are
trying to go down inclines,
tell me, matador, how many bulls
have you dodged with your red cape?
(does the seat make your back hurt?)
it is hot here, the people
are animals, lips smiling but
eyes hissing, smell of death
hanging in the air parachuting from
the canopy above, the smell left over
from the banquet of spirits forsaken and forgotten
by me,
can you tolerate the
constant moving, movement, around
you, tell me, matador, how do
you turn to spear the neck of the
bull so quickly, so clearly, can
you love for tomorrow, how in the
name of God do you get through the
day, through this afternoon where I realize
my courage is shallow to yours, when
will you give up, when will the
chosen bull gore you, trample you,
to the silence of all these animals,
tell me matador, doesn't the promise
of such freedom kiss your neck
to the point of suffocation.

shrapnel

it is the shrapnel
that digs into my
gut
my language but
I think of my leg
blood on my toes
my mouth
my leg, my leg
save my leg
my words
doctor, doctor
I must be able to run,
poet, poet
I must be able to live,
I feel ok
my leg, it will be ok
I know
I believe
we will all live
we will all be alive
trickling away
stay
I am not going to remember all the punctuation marks in my life
jesus, did you see that bomb sail
over the wall as if it was a
message from the lost angels of
Bosnia gliding smoothly in an arc
riding prayers that no one hears
leaving behind the face that
raped my sister (who is dead now)
ate the life of my
parents (who will not seek revenge now)
fucked me without consent
to spawn death
doctor, save the leg
I have to run
forget the shrapnel
it does not hurt
doctor
DOCTOR
SAVE MY LEG
I AM ONLY TWELVE
poet
will you save all the other Bosnias that are
napalming your skin
zecko, I can feel the shrapnel...

damage

he beat her so bad that
her nose was s-shaped
her cheek bone was caved in
then he threw her out of his
truck going at fifty miles per hour
that now makes her sway
similar to the silent prayers drifting
from her mouth to her god
she slurs while speaking
her eyebrows have now collapsed
into her eye socket
which is now shattered
her jaw is broken
her neck has a four inch long knife scar
her arms and legs are blue
she has intestinal damage
and there is so much more I don't know

I am telling myself
I will not allow this to happen
I am telling myself
I will not forgive
I am telling myself
revenge is justified

but I am not her
I will never know her pain
I will never dissolve into her
and coalesce in her veins
to soothe her dissolution

so much damage
an identity of loss
shades falling in slow motion over the horizon of souls
devils laughing with the hyenas

the loudness of the damage
a twisted miscarriage of love
I can never be the savior of all of you

but I will demand for the miracle
of retribution

then you and I with all our damage will laugh at the hyenas

war

what is it about the reverberations that seep through the floor onto the paradise located at the bottom of your mothers feet.
it seems that the noise is of all those people that want to remember why and how other people died in all the wars of the 20th century.
I don't know why at the middle of a sunny day I start to think of all those people with mud on their boots, bullet holes in their sides and the chaos of the insanity thundering over their heads;
today, I remembered again, perhaps because I was drifting in memories of how I first read Wilfred Owen and decided that I wanted to chronicle my world the way he did his, or perhaps, it is because my soul is to the brim with the kaleidoscope images of war, or may be it is because the vertebrae of my spine are made of the blood of conflicts...
it is for the search for the real thing, isn't it since there is nothing more real than war,
it is the only something in our lives that we are completely sure of, whether it is our war against our parents or lovers, whether it is against the evil that we want to destroy for our salvation, or whether it is against the truth of ourselves and desires and reasons,
it is not just going to get easy, there is you and the rest of the world to blame, it is this war that booms over the edge of the world and leaves a sweet sour taste in your and mine mouth.
I can't raise the dead, I can't cure all the sick, I can't feed all the hungry, I can't love all of you, it is this war
I am fighting and remembering the previous ones.

my friends, why I want to be old

my friends, I want to be old
because things will make sense,
things will fit,
love and lovers will forgive
and forget,
the madness of the world will not
keep me awake since I will be deaf,
I will be able to see
what I want to see,
people will think of my rantings
and ravings as senility but they
will be revelations which only children
will know and understand,
my heart will be clear and clean,
my faith and belief will be complete,
death and birth will be immediate,
pain and suffering will be finite,
all my hopes, fears and doubts circling into an explosion
of salvation and heaven,
my money and belongings not mattering to me.
when I am old
all my questions will have answers
and ones that won't I will not ask;
I would have won a singular battle with
time and space and hell.
something I would smile and laugh about without feeling stupid.

Nadya

I remembered her after
so long,
it makes me sad
that it takes me time
to remember someone
I had a crush on
long ago

and then
I heard that she broke
her engagement and
married a doctor
which made me start to
think
if she ever remembers me

I mean, does she at some
private moment late in
the morning tell herself
whatever happened to Kerem

it is so cruel that the people
whom we spend our lives with
at some point
disappear under the velvet skin
of getting older

rushing towards a night
when we would have lived,
the only thing left to talk about
to ourselves, telling the outside
to leave us alone,

is
I wonder whatever happened to Nadya

bomb

I am looking and hearing
how a bomb killed 16 people
and then how this man
shot two people in the head
all the details revolving
on and on into palms
and I don't want
to go to work tomorrow

because tomorrow I want
to understand
to be silent
to be still

and then I want to
give birth to the courage to
be able to
pray for all and mean it

everytime
everytime
this happens
and my hands
have all this senselessness
revolving
and revolving
into the palms.

Mary's breasts

Little light left
in the room, I am
ready to go to be bed,
her back is in a slight three dimensional
curve,
eyelids closed,
her cheeks on the pillow, the hair
languid,
neck relaxed,
her legs soft,
her breast facing towards

heaven
licking prayers from
the lips of ancient spirits,
I relive
the love we made
the sex we had

and as I am making
myself comfortable within
her sanctuary
I am resigned to those
moments
when I will not
be able to completely communicate
to her
how much I love her
and I how much sadness I carry

because the language for my love
and my sadness
does not exist
and I can't invent it.

Gift from my mother

couple of days after
she came here
to be present at my wedding
she gave myself and my wife a photograph album
of pictures
of me
of my life

mostly black and white
some color
all of those days gone by
watermelon on my lips with
innocence dripping when I was eight
cocky arrogance in high school
neighborhood cricket team
three year old talkative kid
my father holding my hand
at the beach
my father looking at me
my father sad at me leaving for college
there is me and mother
my mother when she was young
pieces of us on photographic
paper
several shots of myself and my sister when
we got along
in a large percentage of the photographs
I am smiling

smiling as if the world belonged
to me

and now in a very small way
it belongs back to me
again.

Something from Prestige Tailors

Two weeks ago
I gave my first tailored suit,
I couldn't fit into it anymore,
to an organization that clothes
the homeless and the poor.
That suit was tailored for me in
1985 and the last time I wore it was
1989; it is in perfect condition.
My father asked me if I needed
a suit and said that one of
the few things a man has to have in life
is a suit tailored for him. My father was
known for his good suits, specially
the ones he gave to the homeless. He took
me to his tailor, an old man who said to me
son, you have your fathers look.
In two weeks, after two visits
the gray suit was ready. The first time
I wore it, it was for a dance at the school.
My father came to my room, gave me some
money and handed me a bow tie. He said
a man has to know how to tie a bow tie otherwise
he is one of the crowd. He taught me the secret, helped
me put my jacket on, looked at me and said
he was proud of me.
That night and the other twenty or so
nights I wore that suit
I looked and felt like a man
ready to grip life by the throat
and raise it as a trophy while
others were just
there.

To my father I say,
I hope I have done you proud.

To the person who is going to wear that suit
I say
wear it well.

Open casket and other reflections

I went to Uncle Willys'
wake and funeral, my first
one here. The funeral
was something I understood
but the wake did not make sense to me.
Here was a man in an open casket
with make-up on his face, dressed
in his best clothes, eyes shut,
lips tightly pressed,
flowers surrounding him,
and all the alive around him
chatting
softly whispering to each other
or just walking around.
I walked up to him
and I could smell the chemicals.
I whispered a prayer and
wished him well on his journey.
As I looked at him, I almost wanted
him to see me, I said to myself,
for christ sakes
this dead man deserves privacy.
I wanted to say to everyone
leave him alone and remember him
the way he was not what he is now.

When I was leaving
I thought if Uncle Willy had
passed by the preliminary judgment of
the angels; was he on his way to
the light? As I came out of the
funeral home, I again, remembered
how I did not bury my father,
I again, remembered my guilt,
and I was reminded how I never said I
prayer for him in person as his son
before he was wrapped in his shroud.
Five years have passed by
has he gotten to the light now?

It is all about light.
From birth to death, everything is about light.
To hell with the casket, the chatting,
the last good-byes.
So I say, burn me in this big fire,
and play some loud music.
Burn me to ashes.
Oh yeah, just burn me and watch
me howl the darkness into light.

Skydiving

They are just sitting there
waiting to die
drool sliding down,
eyes vacant.

There are some who in
moments of fear
scream
I don't want to die
and all we can do is
offer a glass of water
and say it is all right.
Their lives are finished,
they can't talk, and if they
can it is gibberish. They don't
even know who you are, they
don't even know who they are.
Sight, touch, taste, feel, smell,
there is nothing for them to sense
because they can't.
Meals are hand fed to them,
they go to the bathroom with
an entourage, the rooms are
cubicles with bunkbeds that seem
like all this is a waiting
room before death.
The sun, moon, people, art,
literature, human endeavors,
numbers, physics, ideas, living,
this is
absent
for them, from them.
The cruelty of it all is so
overpowering.

So this is how I want to go:
if the day comes that I have to
be put into a nursing home for
whatever reason,
take me up in a plane

and let me skydive without
a parachute.
I want to die with the sun
on my back
the wind roaring into my face
and my being ramrodning
directly into the belly of death.
Please.

On the verge of fading away

I have decided that our lives
are ours to take
if there is good reason for it.
I am not going to sit here
and tell you what are the long
lists and pontifications for all
the correct reasons; you go
figure that out yourself.
When there is terminal pain,
pain that is not going to end
because my body has given up,
then I am going to exercise my right
to jump into the pool of heavens
children. I am not craving for
understanding and I am not in
a position to provide it either,
but when I am hurting so much that it
hurts to even think and breathe,
when there is no cure,
when I look at myself and see someone
that is not me,
I am leaving.
And if I am too weak to do
it myself
I will find someone who will.
Look, this is not about the Hippocratic oath,
and it is not about how sacred life is.
It is about being alive more than
just sitting on a chair and hoping that the
benevolent one remembers you and takes
you away from the continuous earthly tortures.
I take responsibility for explaining it to Him that
I couldn't wait because
I am human
and if He says that I desecrated
the whole idea of me being created in His image
and that He really loves me
I am going to say
a) if I am in his image then I should be immortal,
b) if he really loves me, where is the water to wash me of
all this pain.

There is this thing as human dignity.
I am not giving it away for anyone and
if someone needs me to give it back to them
I will.

Give me some more equations

I read these two books which described
in exciting detail all these
incredible things that our universe
holds, using exacting theoretical physics
and mathematical formulations. It turns out that there
are more than ten dimensions,
we can go back into the future,
there are other universes,
there are other yous, mes, others,
the entire universe is going to end
in so many billion trillion years and
then all this will come about again,
right now other creatures from other
galaxies have died, been born,
come and gone here, coming here.
Absolutely amazing stuff. Cosmic strings,
hyperspace, time warps, teleportation,
all our imaginations given a chance to
be true. All in equations. This one book
even proved that God does not exist using
a bookful of equations.
All these equations swirled in my head for weeks,
I felt inferior to the people who had come
up with them, I felt sad that I was going to be
long dead before any of these things came out
to be true, I felt angry that we were still killing
each other.

But you know, every time I think
of space and universe, I get a high
and I am tripping.
Give me some more equations
and I swear I will pay you back.

Apollo

It frustrates me
angers me
saddens me
reduces me
destroys me

that I have not and am never going
to walk on the surface of the
moon

it gives me love
gives me passion
gives me fire
gives me life
gives me freedom

this fact of my birth and death
that I have not and am never going
to walk on the surface of the
moon

either way you look at it
I am not at peace,
the moon could care less
and the rest of us
are clueless
about everything

Mistress

I believe in demons and angels
and everything that
goes with it
but what if all that
was false.
What if there was nothing
before I came and there will
be nothing after I leave.
All my living basically not having
any meaning. Life and everything
associated with it having nothing to do
with heaven or hell, redemption or eternal
forgiveness. But instead, sort of like a mistress; do whatever
you want with her because
you are paying
and the only thing that is important
is the quality and level of
pleasure and desire. Basically,
how good you got sucked off.
Maybe it is a little more complicated
than outlined above,
but what if it isn't.

Yeah, what if it isn't.

There is a pale horse coming

and I am wondering
why Mr. Samad Shaheen
had to die like a beaten dog.
This man was lying there in front
of me soiling his bedsheets
unable to hold his bowels,
groaning in pain, asking the
God above, please let me go.
Mr. Shaheens' hands were shaking,
his eyes almost blind, his bones
stretching his dry skin, the cheeks
sunken, the hair decaying, rot spreading
all over his life. Slowly, so slowly, he slipped
into a deep mist of secrets, I was left watching
a man who, when alive, had stories from the
days when he was a student in Holland, told me
I shouldn't be thinking about girls, showed me books
which had Samad Shaheen, Paris 1955 signed on
the first page, cautioned my father
that the idiots who ran the government were
not only stupid but evil, respectfully informed that
the during his last days my father was insane; all
those stories, all those times he recited Urdu poetry,
all those moments when he used to say, hey, Kerem,
its Prince Kerem, the gift of God who is blessing us by
his presence.

Shit, all those days, all those days.

The last thing he ever told me,
Kerem, I want to die.
I want to die.

You know, his sons were not
there when he died. They said
they were too busy to come.

Mr. Shaheen, tonight I howl for you.

Death, tonight I will ride the pale horse
over the walls of hell, into the meadows of Paradise.

Branded

For the last so many days
I have been continuously remembering
the way the airliner went down over the
Atlantic, and the way this kid was shot in
the face. All I am able to understand
is my inability to even latch onto
that fear, that fucking fear
which must have blazed through
the souls before realizing this
is it.

I have this voice, this picture fucking
branded into my head, of that airliner
cracking, breaking into pieces and people falling,
alive, and that kid feeling the bullets ram through
the very inside walls of his head, all this pain,
all this hurt so
so very so overwhelming
futile and
sad.

There is an urge towards

silence,

a desire towards

wailing.

For my sanity, I have to be
able to do both soon.

Envy

Every time I hike
up a mountain I remember
that there is Mt. Everest that I
will never climb. There are many
reasons I will not climb it, perhaps
some of those reasons are excuses. I
think this way most of the time.
And there are those very simple
moments of reckless clarity and wanton
wisdom, when I know I am capable
of doing whatever is necessary to climb
28,000 plus feet. I believe that in these
moments I envy those who have stood
so high on this world that they breathed
the purest and thinnest oxygen enough
to leap from
my present life
to another one.

Then there are also some
nights when I remember
the names and photographs
who died there; they are still there
frozen, quiet, part of the majestic
till it all blows to hell.
And I want so badly to climb it.

I want so badly to lick my envy
clean from the skin of my soul.

Albert, tell me

how is that you ended up having
a mind that could take a knife
to the smooth satin silk curtain of
unknown questions
and not have the water of the universe
burst its banks
and drown us all.

I mean Albert, you sliced open
the gut of all of those mysteries,
spilled out the secrets, all those
secrets that had been digested
so long ago, with such calm and
finesse. You didn't even blink, didn't
even cut yourself.

But I also know Albert you did not love any
woman, you forgot your children
and you spent most of your life wanting
to be alone with your equations. And I know
it was your choice.

Albert, I understand your choice.

Tell me, Albert, tell me, do you understand mine?

I am like a soldier

getting used to the end of the war,
sitting here
remembering
wanting
slowing down to a standstill.
the adrenaline is arresting
to a silent prayer,
my shock reverberating
selfish pleas for love and sex,
my grief waiting to be held.
look, I know that I am
asking for time to roll backwards like
a large tidal wave on rewind and
that I am stupid, brazen, angry,
and pigheaded enough to tell you
that there is this infinite sadness in
me that I can not name, this infinite
sadness that has to do with people
dying left and right, friends disappearing
from my life because of the effort to live,
this infinite sadness because of distances,
separations, inability to enable all the possibilities,
the futility, the death, the hunger for sense
and meaning.

this war, this soldiering,
all these dragons marching,
there is really no end.

Acid prayer

I am asking for belief,
and I am asking for faith.
I am saying to you that I need
a way to make love to my demons
and be able to walk away without
having claw marks on my back,
or maybe I need a way to run a knife
upwards through the ribcage of these
demons and be able to wash my hands
of the blood while crying.
What I need is a way.

inject me with revolutions
breathe me, contract me with convolutions
wash me in the river of passions
burn me with the tongue of salvations

All my sorrows, my fears, my trivialities,
I would like to kiss them.
These screams of solitude, silence, love,
these muscles that tear so often, I would
like people to understand me.
Make it easier for me to allow people
to understand me. Give me the
wisdom to curl up into the womb
of souls, give me the wisdom to unravel promises.

so tell me the darkness is afar
that the howls of chaos are silent
who is slicing me into constellations
I'm dissolving into acid prayers

I have my insanity and my evil whisper dreams to me,
sorrows real and imagined paralyze me,
my anger and lust invigorate and scare me,
I know there is forgiveness
I know there is beauty
and I know there is peace.
And I also know I am restless and a thief.

I'm swirling into acid prayers
believe me, I don't want to die
believe me, I want to believe

sometimes I drown in desires of recklessness,
sometimes I drink crucifixion till my lungs gurgle,
and sometimes waves of secrets rip the shores of my past, present and future.
Tell me, the vision I had of the magic of winds and rain to heal me
born out of the arias of angels, was it true?

I'm getting lost into acid prayers
who will find me, who will find me?

there is an orange-yellow answer at the end of the aquamarine road
where my turquoise soul mixes with the crimson earth,
guide me further and tell me if I waver.
weep, you survivor of hope
your prayers have come true

Joan

for my mother

there are mornings when I want to burn
for the world
there are those nights when I want to splinter
for you
but all of this, all of the burning and splintering
is because I want
more
from what I am
and have been given

and I will tell you now what
melts from my heart is
greed and love

come down, come down Gabriel
inform me of my lie
wipe the blood from my eye
put your hand on my shoulder and
whisper to me, Kerem, you are no Moses,
you are no Jesus, you are no Muhammed

and I will tell you now what
licks my ribcage is
fame and peace

presence of the past weighs me down
under a sea of day to day acrobats
where the guilt of seeing time run out
is an excuse to scream for an identity that will
survive my body

and I will tell you now what
turns me on is
secrecy and martyrdom

I'm sorry, Joan

Bleach

there are times when you wonder if the person you love, is the one you really love. people around you tell your neighbors how the romance has gone, how the light in their eyes has dimmed, how he is thinking of leaving her for a new adventure. you are thinking to yourself, how am I supposed to be with one person all my life when the spice of life is knowing a stranger beyond the point of a casual acquaintance. it is the unknown, of not having rested yet that bleaches your heart while making you an outcast in your own soul cages. and I am saying to you, you are not alone. my insides are crumbling to earth dust because I am giving up on love, loves, all of that; I don't really know why. it is like an aspirin tablet that does not work anymore; the want to love is absent. you are sitting there thinking snorting coke and getting laid is the next step to nirvana. here I am, wanting to believe that nirvana is a final salvation, a final redemption from the hells of obligation; nobody seems to understand that the only intrinsic function of a flame is to burn... I am suffocating in the oxygenless air of obligation to love. to love should be my choice. to fall out of love should be my choice. how the shit of my life infests, clogs, rots the blood which will one day dry up and fail to deliver all the promises it gave on the day we were born.

tripped by wire

if I ask not to go
 will you stay
if I plead for you to hold me
 will you
all these days my blood has run thin
and I have been left wondering in
the tall green grass of my fears
you know, I am just hanging on
 to you
will you forgive me for having fallen
 in front of you
in weakness and self-destruction
the only thing left for me is to
 sing for you

the rivers have run
all the skies have been born
my back has been scorched by the sun
 again and again
I really don't know what I want
except for this lingering
 desire
not to lose you

I don't feel much for you

you said to me
last night, the lights
out, my head on the
pillow, the vulva of
the entire world
pulsating under my neck;
and I am fighting the
voices gurgling in my lungs
which are saying
how are you going to bring
her to love you
how are you going to bring
her your love
and I don't know.
I am in search for so much
or so I believe
my feet hurt from standing
on my fears
and secrets that only I
pass around from piece of
my insides to another.
You know, sometimes its so
hard to fight back that push
towards leaving it all behind,
jesus, it is so hard sometimes
that I don't feel much for you
either

Ed, this ones for you

it is my obsession today
to pray for someone
that I don't get cancer,
where does this obsession
come from, this tightness
of intellect and thought
whoring itself to the
expectation of fear and
slow death,
maybe it is because I want
to know how I would react
if it did happen,
how would I live,
how would others go
on living
or how many nights and days
would I cry
what revelation would I utter
before I leak into the unknown,
Ed, I saw you bleed
all over me last night
in my dream,
forgive me Ed, forgive me,
I washed your blood off me
and prayed I don't get cancer.

lament

this was when the earth was new:
an old women was the keeper
of all the rivers and of love.
one day a man without a mother came to
her and wanted to drink
from the river because
there was a myth that it could
cure the deepest lament of
the soul.
he asked the woman
keeper of rivers and love
can I drink from your womb?
the woman looked at the sun,
touched the grass at her feet and said.
Kerem, my son, if your
lament is not true you will
die a torturous death.
to this the man fell on his knees
and said, there is a risk of
that but the sorrow of the
world has licked death into
my blood and I can't walk anymore.
the woman kissed my forehead
and gave me the cup, whispering,
Kerem, I am your mother.
Kerem is still on his knees,
cup in hand.

hell

he took her
declothed her
made her fear him
he hit her
he beat her
he raped her
he raped her again
then he killed
he killed again
he was calm
he was satisfied
satiated
then he disposed of her
tomorrow
he took him
declothed him, made him fear him,
he hit him, he beat him, he
sodomized him, he sodomized him
again, then he killed, he killed again,
he was calm, he was satisfied,
satiated, then he disposed of him
tomorrow
today
now, I am shedding
my humanity
to walk into the moans of hell,
my hell,
(help me, save me, forgive me)
fuck you, you animal,
I am going to make you pay.

kisses on the lips of demons

Gabriel, leave me alone, this is
no time for salvation, for the
next edition of your favorite book,
don't you see I can't even tell you
how irrelevant you are to me today.
I want to cry
because they cut off their ears,
they slashed their throats
till they gurgled like butchered sheep,
they cut off their breasts,
they fucked them till
they bled and hanged themselves,
Gabriel there is no sense in us
anymore, I can't see the way
anymore Gabriel, fuck you,
they took them and had
them dig their own graves
before bullets ran into their
brains like fists from the
womb of the devil, tell me
Gabriel, how am I supposed
to deal with all this,
they cut them up with axes,
they strafed them with machine guns, they
ripped their noses and testicles off
their bodies, there are demons
among us Gabriel and all you can
do is just be. there is so much
madness and sorrow in me today
that I am wanting to finish it all,
and release myself from this journey.

serum

about 4 pints of life I need
hold my hand
pierce my arm with your needle
and give me life
tell me I will be fine
tell me, I will understand you
c'mon, let the serum flow into me
let my love return back to me
remove all those fears I have
kiss away all those doubts that
are born in me at every sunset
can you see the color returning
back to my eyes
the color coming back to my skin
hold my hand
read to me folktales and myths
of gods and humans
hold me together
as I stop crumbling
and glue myself into a form
piece by piece
let that serum drip into me
liquid of life, liquid of thirst
kiss me on the forehead
believe in me
make me whole
pull me back from the darkness
pull me back from the struggle
by the edge of the abyss
stay with me
as I rest.

I wish I had talked to Paul Celan

I am here
and you are there
I suffer in my own way
but your suffering is so much larger
there is no release for you
and yet, I can hear you talk
to me and for this people
will think I am crazy, but
I am your son, I am a hypocritical
son who lies and sells himself
everyday because there are things
life has asked of him, there are parts
parts of my insides that scare
me but again, I want to
touch you
breathe you
vaporize into you
then I look over my shoulder
there is the tease of
reckless adventure
of giving into the reckless
demons and desires
to wash myself free
of consequences
but I turn back to you
because I know
the alternative is too easy;
I am son of your womb and semen
and I will always return
back to you.

all my love for you

it is his absence
which scratches
my back,
nail marks scrapping
the skin,
his last and first hug
for me,
son, look after yourself,
his last smile,
a birth of a tear at
the corner of his eyes
that have risen in me.,.
after those moments
he let go of me forever
beat my mother
stole the sun from my sister's soul,
the bastard tortured us all for so
long, endlessly, and
yet, there are those
tulip memories that
bloom at the base of
my neck, father,
father, you know
I love you endlessly,
but remembering you is
torture.

blue eyes

he says his sister in law
(does she have blue eyes)
loves crack
has been to rehab,
the parents have tried,
his wife has begged.
Sylvia loves crack,
trying to grab the horizon
kissing the soft angels
tasting the nectar of orgasm
upon orgasm
seeing the colors of her birth
there is now no return
but to death
he says
which I believe;
I look at him,
I want to say
Mark, she will find
her way, he says,
that bitch is not
coming near my daughter.
I wonder if she has blue eyes.

serenade

tell me, how do you
dodge that bullet
which has your name on it,
whom do you beg
to not split
your heart into two,
where do you run to,
under which shadow
do you hide,
don't your eyes hurt from
the glare of fear,
doesn't the lung collapse
from the compression
of the cages
how do you send your
love beyond the walls
of your projects,
tell me, wise on,
how can I sacrifice
myself for you.

this guilt

yesterday I did not go hungry,
I said, yesterday, my
blood did not evaporate.
the roof over my head
did not crumble,
my dreams at sunrise were
still intact,
the river from where my
soul flows is still not dry,
but still
my heart is ashes,
I have cried days
and I have cried nights
because I am more
lucky than you,
because I am not able
to show the true face
of God and Satan,
and even though
I prayed days
and I have prayed nights
I will never ever
fully know you or love you
or hold you
or give you a cusped
handful of my breath.

freedom or death

this will be a minimalist
war
precision accuracy
of 20mm rounds
that will devour
me
either way
ask me:
which one will you choose.
I don't know.
there is family I have
to support and love,
there is a world I want to
save and leave an imprint on,
there is the dance & music
that beckons me to the promise
of real salvation,
there is my voice that was
born unchained but,
but,
there is my fear of choices,
of you,
of evil,
of hell,
of love & memories;
tell me is this war for real,
tell me are you the only one,
smell me, taste me, feel me,
look at me and ask me
which one will I choose.

I refuse to choose.

whore

I cannot give you my love
because
things are now different
choices have been made
and the claw marks on
the walls
are getting harder to make
life has moved on
because
all the reasons have changed

and you thought I was your angel.

LSD

I want to swallow
that pill
and get swallowed into
a monsoon of colors and dreams;
I want that danger
of fighting the demons
that belong to you and me.
Maybe it is my want
my want
to touch that fine line on
the horizon of my mind,
the horizon before the cliff,
the cliff before the abyss,
the abyss before the fall,
it is all in the touching
and to be able to come back,
you know, I just want the trip
and nothing else,
I don't care about the opening
of secrets, of the final frontier,
I just want
to go some place else.

you can have all my toys

I have no comfort for you,
I don't have my prayer of
miracles for you, simply because
you are not human,
you are divine,
you are the reason
why I tell myself
there is more to living
than pure love;
you are crippled, poor, hungry,
eleven years old, a Palestinian girl
without toys, you walk in
pain, you smile in pain,
your mind is just thinking of
today and all the tomorrows that
could have been yours,
how am I to
understand your life.
I am helpless,
useless,
the guilt all mine,
which is why
I need to hold you
and tell you
you are my saviour.

dead man walking

they tell me that my blood
is tainted
they indicate to me in
so many words
that my skin will shrivel
and shrivel,
boils and aches will
occupy my flesh,
my insides will rot
and break into tiny
pieces
and my soul will dissolve
into a collective
cage of unfair deaths,
tell me Kerem
will you sing and dance
in my memory everytime I die,
in my memory everytime I die,
will you write for me
everytime I give up my right
to live to the devil,
Kerem, tell me, will you
remember me for the
rest of your life, till
the river bed in your soul
runs dry,
tell me Kerem, will you
live for me.

Salidas de emergencia

I don't get it; why would somebody, no a mother, beat her daughter so badly that the vertebrae of the child's neck break & snap, twist the spinal chord into convolutions of anger and hate, and kill her. didn't she see that whenever her fists hit the flesh, the skin would tear, the blood would arrive, the bone would bruise? I mean, she is a mother... all that screaming and yelling, the shaking and jolting, how would she have not seen the soul of her own womb suffocate and collapse, disappear without a whisper; all those words that were exchanged, all that bond of mother and child which was eradicated, I don't get how it just did not register with her. everyday every fucking day there is another moment of desperation and failed escape similar to the previous, another moment of killing piece by piece, ripping the energy of innocence bit by bit, and I am at a loss to understand how can my race be this degenerate. in the image of God my ass; we not only kill each other but eat each other it pisses me off not because it is senseless, or cruel, or violent, but because it reminds me of the ugliness of us, all of us, and it reminds me to stop & be sad, to grieve, to try to do something to stop out spiral into madness, but I can't even believe in that. all I see is to kill like this is to reside at the apex of sin by the throne of It and It is here all chatters of meanings shut up. silence is my only refuge.

what do you do

what do you do, when this life
you have raised, is no more
because he killed himself.
do you crave for his presence &
think all this is a dream, or
do you get angry because you
feel cheated. the reason I am
asking is, because I
believe, at some point,
the living have the right
to ask the dead who
killed themselves,
why?
I want the answers to
the above questions,
so that one day
I can rest in peace.

goddess

you have come to me asking
for an unconditional torrent
of love, when there is so
much blame to throw around;
and I am wondering if it is too
late, all the past that we
have dredged up suffocating our
lungs leaving us unable to
raise the dead,
we will do it again you see
my dear goddess
the temple standing here
because of all the hurt,
all the coagulating blood
in our veins, who is
going to save us, who
is going to tell us that
our love is still alive,
that our lives still matter.
There is no one who can
make it easier, this pain,
this crunching darkness only ours
to digest, but I have heard
forgiveness is under the soles
of our feet and our struggle
towards light is no lie.

it will be ok

she is saying to me
how she had enough of my
father, how after all these
years the love was gone. They
were going to have a divorce,
she says, tears growing into
mirrors of grief behind her
pupils, cheekbones becoming
redder, lips quivering, she
had said ok to the divorce.
He wanted to leave her, us,
start all over again. She is
looking at me and asking me,
Kerem, now he is dead, what
are we going to do? My head is
bowed and I am unable to
console my mother, I am unable to
hold her and say, Mother, I will
take care of you, I can't say it
till I can understand how does
love die; we are sitting across
each other, our souls dripping
into the floor, childhood dreams, alive memories
drowning in sorrow & sadness -- this
fifty one year old woman in
front of me is crying and I am without
answers. All I keep on repeating is, it will
be ok, Mother, it will be ok. It is the
only thing we believe in and understand.

right now

right now, today
I don't love you. it has
nothing to do with you, inside
me nothing makes sense and
nothing seems to be satisfied,
there is a desire to move on,
move on to somewhere, something different
and desire someone else;
there is only one reason for all this -- I
am a coward. For all the revolutions
I want to give birth to, for all the
world I want to swallow in the
name of love, I don't want to care anymore.
I don't love you as I am
blind with selfishness, blind with
wanting to be reckless and
alone. Maybe it is a need for
a suicide from the daily
grind, this routine from 7 am to
10 pm, five days a week, but
there is more to it; I am
passing from the borders of love
to that of ambivalence because
I don't care anymore, can you
understand that, I don't care anymore.
And floating on this river of simple
explanations, I am not interested in tomorrow.

Eyelashes

for Rima Montoya

it is about 6:30 p.m., empty parking lot, I'm
done with work today; sitting
in my car waiting for it to warm up
so that all those nuts and gears
and metallic parts will be
ready to move me. The panel lights
are on, green and orange only,
the engine revved up, the seat
still cold, and I am looking out
of my window, far away when I see
my eyelashes in the dark reflection.
I blink, my eyelashes
flutter and I see it. Each eyelash
has an individualistic curve
to it, they are all in a smooth
line, arcing backwards, I remember
Mary's back, blink and see it
again. I don't hear the engine
anymore, panel lights don't seem to
be on and I don't
want to drive anymore, I don't
want to work anymore, think anymore,
tomorrow or the day after. I blink again and
again and again. I see it, see it, see it. That is
all I want to see. Leave me alone, I just want to
sit here and see the
eruption of a cluster of constellations and eyelashes.

the beast and whore

for Johnny Cash

this is a story given to me as a secret:
a long time ago the world was engulfed
in hot orange-red flames. there
was a man who prayed to the
gods above that he was prepared
to do anything to bring the cool
breezes he knew once as a child
back to the earth. the man
prayed everyday, all day for a whole
year before a vision came to
him which told him that
if he ran down to the last river
at the end of world on the
edge of the horizon and drank
the water, he would become
a trigger and the flames of the
world would vanish. after
many adventures he was able to
drink the water, becoming a tiger
and saving the world from destruction.
days later, as he was roaming the
newly reborn earth, he came upon
a beautiful woman. He fell in
love immediately and as he
was looking at her she
said to him,
tiger, will you kill me
and in return you
shall become a man.
the tiger asked why
she wanted to die, to
which the woman told him
she was a tigress once and
that a vision showed her how
she would become a whore
by drinking water from a river and so
starve the flames of the world.
the tiger and whore talked for
days, then weeks, then months, then years,
sun up to sun down,
he told her of his love,
she told him of her life
she once knew.
on a morning which has
no date or place,
the tiger killed the woman
he loved
and went on living.
He never killed again,
and never fell out of love.
And that is how the world blossomed.

bosnia

the mud, sticky mud and
above a sorrowful sky, raining
down secrets. pieces of clothing
clinging to the sticky
mud, a child to its mother,
the sorrow of the bones naked
unto the world, all that hate
and mud, polaroid's nudging beyond
the horizon of a gaze, wanting to
be seen one last time for the
persistence of memory and life; I am
trying to hold them still before
the stampede starts, of all this
rage and sadness. all of you side
by side, there is no flesh, no
features, no you to you anymore. these
sub-automatic images in my
head of you falling down into the
mud scared, dying within milliseconds
of an arc that sweeps your entire life,
that explosion onto you, the onslaught. those
loud rapes and slicing butchery seeping
into you, all around you, with
all the aching, you have run
to a stand still. the mud
grabbing me down, making
me crumble, making me die.
last words, last whispers, a last
testament of the freedom of soul
and spirit, where will I bury
you all in peace. hold onto
me and I will never let go,
we will not give in to the
fucking bastards, we are safe
in our prayers and tears.
did you sing before your voice
dismantled into vertiginous
disintegration? this mud is
so silent and I am alone;
have faith, you will light
my way out of revenge and into grace.
the rain, how it tries.
and the trees saw it all.
this is where we all coalesce.

sun

for Luiz Moreira

Roque, did you shout
freedom or death
as they poured gasoline
over you and lit you
aflame?

Roque, did you say
fuck you, fuck all of you
as they laughed and
pissed on you as you
burned?

Roque, did you forgive
and kiss them when
they were collecting your
ashes and putting it in a
garbage bag?

Roque, listen to me Roque,
will you hold my hand
when they come for me?

Yes, I know. You and I
are children of the same mother.

Alzheimer and me

they are sitting still, hands on knees, eyes straight ahead, lips moving silently, whispering mutterings of how things don't make sense anymore. I am thinking where have they hidden their passion of being alive, I want to believe it is hidden & not lost. talk, please talk, and tell me all of this is an act, something to brutally teach me getting old is not a drive down the highway of wisdom, nirvana and fulfillment. I can smell sanitized death here, the dryness of thought and heart, this is hell for destitutes. I am so alone here, the door leading outside is a portal to escape from this abyss. forgive me, forgive me for leaving you. Behind me a woman is crying, saying, pleading, I don't want to die here, I don't want to die here. The nurse gives her a glass of water, have the water dear, have the water.

tug of war

heave, hold, heave.
the rope cutting into
your palms, your ribcage
and shoulders sore,
inflamed, heave, hold,
heave, you dig in your heels,
arch your back, tighten
your jaw, your thighs pushing
down, heave, hold,
heave, your lungs are
full, your throat screaming,
your eyes looking straight
ahead, heave, hold, heave,
and you, titan, pull, you
pull and pull believing
that in this single instance
of time and space nobody
and nobody can conquer you,
all the music, all the words,
all the faces you know
are absent, heave, hold, heave,
you pull, you slide, you fall, you
pull and on the other side
of the chasm above the
river of fire and blackness
you see fear in the eyes of the devil.

drive

driving to work, 7:04 am, and
I see the water in the
bay steaming, smoke emanating
from the pores of its surface,
I am doing about 48 mph, I
know outside with the bright
sun shining, a moderate chilly
breeze, it is approximately 32 C.
but I keep on driving, thinking
it is not that hard to walk on
water through the mist and
enter into heaven, hide away
from the madness that will train
and cage me from 7:24 onwards.
I don't stop, the car in front of me
braking because the
curve of the road is too challenging.
the red tail lights on the car
warning me to keep my distance
or else. behind me, another
asshole is riding my ass. the water
to the right of me still ablaze
in white fire, above, the sky
chattering to me as if I was the
day after creation. I want to
slam the brakes, get out, walk and vanish.
I don't. I arrive at work at 7:25 am. The
rest of the day is torture.

Hunger

All I can see is hunger,
hunger for this,
hunger for that,
hunger for food,
hunger for love,
all hunger balled together
in a cosmos of obsession,
hate and poverty.

And all I am doing,
all I can do is,
hunger for satiation.

Shell shock

for Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon

Your knees are trembling,
the voices in your head
muttering
whispering
shouting,
all those dreams,
those horrors
the unstoppable shaking
the shaking
the uncontrollable shaking,
the hands contorted,
your spine bent, twisted,
eyes blind,
there is nothing, nothing
left for you to live for

tell me, how can I
swallow you ,
how can I not forget you,
how can I be your testimony,
how can I
and not have shell shock,

how can I
because I have never
been shell shocked.

how far away is the Indian Ocean from here?

for Irem Durdag, Raphael

Alberti

so you hate yourself for not being able to believe
in people, you hate yourself for hating
me because you want revenge for all
those things I did & didn't do. you
have given up hope because life has
fucked you over ten times too many and
there is not much point to trying anymore.
you don't believe in love because we
are all selfish and evil, hurtful and out
to get only what we want, what we need.
people are dying left and right and you are
tired of caring because nobody else does.
you are rotting to pieces inside, your termite
ridden bones, hollow tubes of white and
yellow, because you see yourself
in this cage where nothing matters. you
can't move anymore because you don't
know where to move to. there are so
many questions, vengeances, discomforts and
tears under your skin that the immortality
you want as your birthright has dissolved
into a purple haze of turquoise nights
which beckon desires of swallowing
tablets of pure sulphur, vinegar and
benzine. faces in front of you are melting
into a dawn of scorching blood explosions
splattering flower petals on metallic gray
dreams that have old, dirty spiderwebs
convoluting around your hands. you know that
the iron of the stars is inside the molecules
of your eyes, but those stars are spilling in
seismic quakes of doubt, fear and loss, the
razor under your throat so close to the eyes
of the precipice. your self-esteem has
been gnawed like the moon in an eclipse
with nitric acid, the memory's of secrets
you won't reveal to me bouncing off the walls
of your head, echoing into a million
resurrections of the scorching screams that
resound of your father not realizing what
fear is before he drowned in an icy river
without saying his love for you was absent.
behind your eyelids, in the passageways
of your nostrils the charred smell of burning
flesh tells you, demands of you that there
is no redemption, grace and forgiveness but
yet, yet the moist stench of oblivion has
not yet ignited all your angels; the shadow
of evil has not raped you yet. that
darkness inside you which bludgeons the

skulls of all the animals that you see
feeding on trivialities wants the attention
of somebody to give a shit about you, to
give you the answer, to be at peace. and
you struggle with all the vultures which
roam the archway of your spine, beaten,
paralyzed, blind and voiceless, the silence
of the difference between the dead and
living pushing you, pushing you away from
the light of your mother. you want
an estacy of orgasm that will lift you
into an epoch where pain is fable, an old
tale where the distance between reality
and dream is immeasurable. this whirling
in your soul, the desecration, the violation,
the complication of your breathe that
is born by such great effort every second
by your diaphragm, you want it to stop.
to stop because you are tired, you are
tired. you want all your begging and pleading
for help to pay off, someone by now should
have been able to stick an I.V. into you,
resuscitate you, hold you head in their
hands, kissed your forehead and reminded
you that the demons, the devils, all the
ten million and one fanged hells you have
lived and owned and fought against are
no more. you want to be on your bed
and a vision will tell you the blades that
have sliced your life as if you were a
discarded dog is but a test of your faith
and you have passed this ordeal,
the songs you
have will no
longer vanish,
the show
of ablution will
now wash you,
you will say I
love you, brother,
and you will have become divine and digested
evil forever.
but behind you
the ocean is evaporating
into a blue pale cloud
of useless whispers,
the grass has melted
to a dark green bile
that is now your only food,
the poison from the
promises people you loved
that were never kept
is dissolving your feet,
the smell burning up your
lungs, all these meanings
you searched, you searched,

you suffered for, still not
there, still not existing at all,
the pain focusing on your
knees as you crumble,
and you are remembering
everything, every moment,
and you are screaming
what I have become dear brother,

you are screaming,
I am going to make you hurt
before I break, shatter, splinter
into a million buds of jasmine.

