

# 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  
mother's 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 fleshs 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 Marys' 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 encagement in a life which has slapped us  
left and right without remorse, you are right, I  
rather be saying fuck it all, get of 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 uncomfortable, 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 Mohenjodaro 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 Lords help. Otherwise,  
you are destined for hell. You are an  
unbeliever and I want to urge you to  
follow in the Lord 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  $\frac{1}{4}$  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 vermilion 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 anestized 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 feet  
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 my 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 Siddhartta, 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 ramroding  
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 see 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  
afame?

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, vengeance, 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 estascy 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.

