



SHEARSMAN

139 & 140

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EDITOR
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Rizwan Akhtar

shrink

dawn is like an unattended page
squeaky birds tear complacency
gained over night in a warm quilt
“what was the dream that jolted”
you have asked me taking a note
images permuted scribbled
prophetic is so apocalyptic, the
silent is so noisy, in-between
I feared you declare me insane
or some other term unheard,
regime of physic disorders bigger
than a continent, wars say in
Africa plagued souls, Fanon lived
diagnosed the colonial madness
of establishing a collective dream
but a white dream with a white core
but my individual dreams are black
Lacanian, I cannot figure out like
Conrad’s Marlow whether it is
a nightmare or not, ‘You are my
shrink” ‘you know history burns
jungles of community and when
we give vote we only think about
taxes’, bloodshed is a parliament
we endorse—women in Kashmir,
Uyghurs in consternation facilities
Kurds in Armenia are not so distant
cousins of Bosnians and survivors
of Dresden and Palestine—all dreamt
freedom but then came Guantanamo
again we surrendered to the dreams

Of Blairs and Obamas, chucked out
Mandela installed Generals, democracy
is so subtle to the effect of a dream I am
narrating in which I saw a Syrian child
embraced by a Turkish soldier and here
you are digging up its nitty gritty.

A Posthumous Letter to My Father

By writing this I am trying to make up
for not talking to you when the time
was ripe. Now the silence spooks
around your figure emerging from a
field of echoes seeing you hulking a
grey Vespa reaching home punctually—
regrets of my childhood climbed over
shoulders heavy despite that rare scowl
I caused by transgressing, that pretentious
despotism carried a child hidden inside,
a wispy odor of your sweat attended me
how you hatched vowels caressingly
and bred rebukes in manly plosives
on evenings I behaved and bothered
your lingual fits subsided benignly
couldn't a pathos be more handsome
than words held back long letting me
imagine a fossilized language breaking
rules of memory before I could close.

An Occasional Muse

"Let everyone know, I lived a very happy life."

—Orhan Pamuk

I saw you climbing the stairs on a day
when Lahore's winter gave a flimsy
knock making me descend silently
on words kept for the right occasion
outside cars cruised for parking dizzily
you came out of the one ejecting me,
silence with your plumose outfit wiped
off my heart, there was a premonition
that you are not a matrimonial type, a
perfect door for a stranger to settle in
without much ado feathering vanity.

Ghazal of Loss

An abrupt encounter revives loss
return to past also returns the loss

haven't I promised to be with you
doubting my words was also a loss

this ghazal's outcome is petrifying
moulded in English was Urdu's loss

for hours I mediated inside a shrine
a ritual of compensation of my loss

let's not show but seek anonymity,
lovers tend to hide; a scandal of loss!

a sadness looms over my couplets
Oh! melancholy the weight of loss

that random touch of your moist hands
that sweating body oppressed by its loss

now bombs not poems govern the city
our graveyards our oeuvres of new loss

in streets of Lahore I wandered with you
Love's Labour's Lost—added to life's loss

simple was the trap laid down by beloved
the poet freed with effort yielded to loss.

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

The way you loved me was like a creeper hanging
on a rusty frame of a window creaking its history.
The way you left me was like a joke struggling to
find laughter and listeners are least histrionic.

On other occasions which can be called lyrical;
I encircled your vertebrate in search of the right
spasm but ended crawling over less aesthetic
outposts of flesh, a melancholic eye navigated
inspiration sinking when you referred to things
not worth mentioning making love—a tea-seller boy
singing a maudlin ditty choreographed by a pair of
lachrymose lovers, an audience for a happy ending—
so you wanted me to collect relics and acquisitions for
a museum not knowing who are curated and curators.

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