

# The Falconer

*poetry collective '23*

## *From The Editor*

Time and again, I have circled around this inquiry: *what is poetry* to me? For the longest time, I have been unable to put pen to paper and let all that simmers and gargles inside out. Continuously, I have watched myself fail – something stuck at the back of my throat that if only I could reach in and pull out. To let this bubbling, raging volcanic concoction burst out — but just before the seething liquid spurts out, the feeling escapes. The inspiration, the passion, the vehement overflow, the paralyzing expansion of the heart, all lost. Words at the edge of the tongue – perpetually lost.

Similarly, I have watched myself – forced myself into writing at times as well, scribbling random words that are like worms on a page – a wild rampage, a militant invasion of the clean, white slate. The disappointment and desperation that reeked out of this attempt disgusted me. The paper smelt rotten and pungent, I could not approach it, I could not look at it. I was often left with no choice but to witness *it* crumbling to dust. Words lost yet again.

I believe words come to you when you least expect them to. Words come to you, sitting on your desk, staring at the concrete structures in front of you. Words come to you before you have an exam that you are not prepared for. Words come to you when you feel like you are sinking. When you are suspended mid-air. In the middle of classes. Riding a bus. Opening a door. Words burst out of you and with a needle in hand, you weave through the multitude of droplets and craft new intricate patterns every time.

Poetry, for me, then, is waiting. It is waiting for the eclipse to be over and experience language in a nascent light. Through desperation, disgust, passion and paralysis, it is above all waiting. It is pain and pleasure but most ardently it is to become one with the process, to fuse and transform. It is floating in the streams of experience and perception until you are completely submerged – drowning, only to cough up sputtering words that can suddenly speak. *What other form could utter such lack but poetry?*

## *Meet the Team*

Embarking upon this journey with a close friend of mine, Moaz Ahmed Siddiqui three years ago as the Sub-Editor was a life-altering decision. Working with a man who has a unique eye for aesthetics and simultaneously knows how to structure the fragmented works of passion by the talented students of the department, I have learnt quite a lot. From the beginning, through the magazine, it has been our primary goal to bring a platform to the department where people can share, cherish and above all communicate and express. In hopes that the insurmountable distance that we felt as first years between each individual of the department could be surpassed, we have continued to grow.

We are glee-ridden to announce a bunch of talented individuals who have joined our core team: Duaa Azim as the Sub-Editor, Shehzeen as the Content Head and Maham Owais as the Magazine Coordinator. Together we hope that we can continue to move forward, grappling at glimmering ideas, and bringing issues that have time and again been deeply appreciated by fellow students and teachers alike.

– *Zonera Asim, M.A Final, Morning, Editor*

The Falconer, personally, has been quite incredible as far as instilling newfound confidence in an up-and-coming writer goes. From my very first feature in the magazine, as a doe-eyed freshman with little to no idea about her expectations from the University of Karachi, I can safely say that it has been nothing short of a grounding source — and the one medium where my art well and truly found its feet. As a reader and writer, I've been associated with this magazine for more than three years, fortunate enough to have formed lasting friendships along the way, and it is honestly an honor to now be part of its editorial team, as well. I can't wait to see what the coming years have in store for this little platform.

– *Duaa Azim, 3rd Year, Morning, Sub-Editor*

I started my journey with The Falconer last year as a member of the content team. Since then, I've got to meet some wonderful people from the department which couldn't have been possible without the magazine. Just being part of the magazine, in whatever capacity, has brought me immense pleasure. Needless to say, when Zonera

approached me for the position of the Content Head, I was taken aback in the most pleasant way. All of this is very new to me, and frankly, I have some big shoes to fill. The Falconer is very close to my heart as a reader and I am going to do my best to make sure that every reader who picks up the upcoming issues feels the same way as I did every time I read the magazine. The English department has given me friends and a community that I cannot imagine my life without, which is why I see The Falconer as a medium of giving something back to the said department.

*Carpe Diem!*

– *Shehzeen, M.A Final, Evening, Content Head*

It has been over three years of me being a part of this magazine, and I'm having an amazing time with the team, all of whom have been working extremely hard for this magazine to transform it into something we all have been dreaming about.

Alhamdulillah, we're getting all the appreciation by our teachers and mentors through all of these years. When Zonera, approached me with this idea and introduced me to two co-operative members of the team, Moaz Ahmed, the Editor and Manal Fatmi, the Content Head, I wasn't so sure about joining but now that I have, I've realized that it only takes me around three to four days to design, but the members of the content team work for the magazine through and through. I appreciate every new member who has joined us on this journey, and it is because of our dedicated Falconer team that we stand here today!

– *Amtul Qamar, M.A Final, Morning, Design Lead*

Although my journey with The Falconer has not been very long, it has been incredibly rewarding in its brevity. As a wide-eyed first-year intent on finding a co-curricular purpose in the English department, I, along with a friend, ended up emailing the editor of The Falconer a list of ways we believed we could help contribute to the magazine. I couldn't have imagined that single move to have panned out the way it has, and am grateful for every opportunity that the magazine has since provided me with. During my first meeting with the core team of the magazine, the passion and care with which they spoke of their endeavor surprised me, and it was that, above all the great things The Falconer has achieved, that made me realize how special it is. For me, personally, The Falconer has been central in helping me find my place in the English Department.

– *Maham Owais, 2nd Year, Morning, Coordinator*

ابکے وہ زخم نہیں دل میں کہ بھر جاتا ہے  
وقت آتا ہے ٹھرتا ہے گزر جاتا ہے

جانے وہ کونسی منزل ہے کہ جس کی جانب  
روزیہ قافلہ شام و سحر جاتا ہے

محفلِ جام و سبو ساغر و خم گرم کرو  
پھر سوئے دیدہ تر خونِ جگر جاتا ہے

جان جاتی ہوئی لگتی ہے بہر صورتِ شوق  
دل بچانے کی کریں فکر تو سر جاتا ہے

بھر اکرام و فاسوچ کے اب بھی اکثر  
رو دیدا و جفا دل سے اتر جاتا ہے

رنج گر حد سے گزر جائے تو جی لے انسان  
حد پہ آکر جو ٹھہر جائے تو مر جاتا ہے

ہم تو خود راہ میں سٹھے ہیں ہمیں کیا معلوم  
کوئی آتا ہے کدھر سے تو کدھر جاتا ہے

راہِ جو یائی ہستی میں مرے ساتھ شفیع  
دیکھیے اور کہاں تک یہ ہنر جاتا ہے

افتخار شفیع

ہم نہ کہتے تھے کہ اس آگ میں جل جائیں گے ہم  
تو نے سمجھا تھا کہ ہر بار سنبھل جائیں گے ہم

کل گئے تھے تو اسی آج کی حیرانی میں  
پھر اسی آج کی حیرانی میں کل جائیں گے ہم

صحیح ہوتی ہے کسی خواب کے ڈھلن جانے پر  
شام ہو گی تو کسی خواب میں ڈھلن جائیں گے ہم

سُن تو رکھا تھا کہ ہے ایک تغیر کو ثابت  
ہم کو معلوم نہ تھا اتنے بدل جائیں گے ہم

ہم بہت دور سے آئے ہیں تری قربت میں  
تیری قربت میں بہت دور نکل جائیں گے ہم

افتخار شفیع

آرزو کی شام ہے

آرزو کی شام ہے

فاصلوں کے درمیاں میں سائے سے بڑھتے ہوئے

خامشی کی دھول بادِ تند میں چڑھتی ہوئی

آنسوؤں کا اک تلاطم قلب میں میدار ہے

بستر مرگِ وفا ہے

اور تو بیمار ہے

اک ہی بس نام ہے

ناچتا گاتا ہوا رقصان ہے بادِ شہر میں

ہر قدم ہر گام ہر لحظہ حیاتِ دہر میں

شوخی گفتار میں بھی درحدیثِ یار بھی

بڑھ رہی ہی درد کی مقدار بھی

رفتار بھی

افتخار شفیع

Dust picked up by a gust of wind  
And smashed against a whitened wall  
Traces a figure in rough outlines  
Soon erased as the particles fall

An image drawn on the magical slate  
Erasèd and drawn and erased again  
Time like a child creates and recreates  
A face and a figure that do not remain

A play-dough doll in the shape of a man  
Clutched, and crushed and punched into shape  
And clutched and crushed and rolled again  
To be poked and thumped is the play-dough's fate

The particles of being unite and disperse  
Being and becoming forward and reverse

*Dr. Faisal Nazir*

Who knows of desire more than me  
Whom fulfilment betrays like the famed false lover  
Enticing and engaging and then running free  
Slipping through my fingers with a dry 'It's over'.

Who knows of desire more than me  
Whom fulfilment betrays like a cheap perfume  
Exhilarating, effusive but soon out of steam  
Evaporating into air after a momentary bloom

Who knows of desire more than me  
Whom fulfilment betrays like a kite cut loose  
Encircling and entangling into a distant rivalry  
Then flying with the rival and my hand refuse.

I am left with desires which I must learn to resist  
Turn traitor to this false friend who plays dirty tricks.

*Dr. Faisal Nazir*

There is a broken clock  
Hanging upon the wall  
I hear its loud ticktock  
Though it doesn't move at all.

In their youthful eyes I see  
Time staring at me  
On their flat faces I see  
My own futility

He has overstayed  
Who shouldn't have come at all  
Time has finally said  
Pack up and leave the hall.

*Dr. Faisal Nazir*

### ***THE DAWNING***

The world shifts on its axis  
when it dawns on you  
that your parents  
are not the font of knowledge and wisdom  
the epitome of perfection  
not gods,  
but imperfect, fallible human beings  
with dreams and desires  
a life beyond parenthood.

The aftershocks stun  
the tremors reverberating a long while  
the blind trust shattered.  
Though this is replaced  
by a maturer, adult understanding  
the child in me mourns the loss.

*Nishat Wasim*

The walls stare at the emptiness  
And so do the corridors  
You used to pass from.

Although years have elapsed  
Since you left this sanctuary,  
For me time has come to a halt.

The clock has ceased to tick  
As if its hands have been amputated,  
Paralysing time till eternity.

The entire place is clad in the robes of nostalgia,  
Exuding a strong sense of solastalgia.

Your presence — an oasis in this desert was truly a bliss,  
You are the person this place will always miss.

*Shumaila Shafket Ali*

I invite you to come to my home  
A place where there is no light  
Except when voices speak  
In indecipherable murmurs  
Or in stifled screams  
When entering my home i request that you leave  
Your heart outside (there's no point of it there)  
Along with your hopes and your dreams  
I will greet you at the entrance with a laugh and take you inside  
The room (the only room in the house)  
And i will offer you a thing (the only thing i keep)  
To eat (while you take a seat) -  
It tastes like poison but it does not kill  
It feels like flight but it cuts off your wings  
It opens up your mind as you chew  
You will feel like you've woken up lying buried in your grave  
From your mouth loneliness will seep into your blood  
Until you find the answer you've been searching for  
But only after forgetting the question that made you search for it  
It will hurt like an addiction  
As you swallow you will remember this:  
All your life you've been making yourself forget  
That all you want is a kiss that nobody  
Nobody can give -  
And a glass of water  
All the while we will converse for hours in silence  
Or we will talk knowing that no one is listening  
Until you are full  
And then the door will open and you may take your heart, hopes and dreams  
And leave  
But having tasted my thing to eat  
Who would ever want to leave?  
So, when will you be visiting?

*Dr. Moonis Azad*

*Fantasia at 3am*

What else is there that commands the kinetics within, like the night sky—teetering between the edges of deep night and a rising dawn?

with its violet invites into externality:

the cool sky removed from the embroidered twinkle of midnight dark,

before the putting on of the warm facade of day,

Nyx's unembellished royalty pronounced in absolute control over the eternal shadowy realms.

Circadian marbles to put on a circus to instill tremors in the lightning bearer's domineering visage—the night sky exists in its utmost simplicity.

It's seething mystery's chain-like threads binding even the titan's revenge:

The black chariot spurs on in the eternal, between moments of change.

*Muhammad Yousha*

I—

Draught Wrought land, Ploughed  
A Violent Affair.  
Rigid, Cracked Language Upturned  
Dead Metaphors.

This Land Can't Incubate A Thought Into Blossoming.  
A Lack of Spring Waters  
Disavowed Soil—  
Gravity Seems To Work Here With More Efficiency.

This Flesh Clenches Itself.  
Muscles Obstruct.  
Intestines Choke.  
Lungs Collapse.

A Force That Turns Onto Itself  
Existing In Abundance  
A Cracked Crust Seals The Land.

Yet Yet— A Recoiling  
Around The Chain Links  
The Cracks Of Abundant Force  
The Cardinal Membrane Rises  
—a liberation through wilting

*Muhammad Yousha*

*To a Lover*

I have some advice  
For you to scratch  
Like a lottery ticket  
To try, test, and tease.

You should love the entirety  
Of me. My swollenness of  
Grief. Doodles on the carpet  
Made from my fluttering leaves.

The itch on the nape of my neck.  
You've discovered what's left:  
Gentle favors make  
Life circle at ease.

You must find me either  
Ashore or in buoyancy.  
Dying comes next,  
But before you, please.

And if along the way, you find  
A love not resembling me:  
Think fondly of history,  
Forgive me my disease.

*Aamna Motala*

*Newness*

In some ways, the fold  
From which life emerges,  
Is wracked with violence.

Whether bud or womb,  
Whether shell or wound.

Newness is not simply  
On the journey to renew,  
Nor a map anew.

Newness is violence  
Newness is numb to.

A falling tree is only  
an illusioned silence.

Each root must protest,  
Unfurl and whirl  
To a long drawn withering.  
If I hear the violence of silence,  
Can you not hear me too?

*Aamna Motala*

I was born from an unsettling emptiness,  
thrown into existence  
haphazardly  
by two people  
who mistook  
fate for love.

I inherited nothing  
from the women of  
my family,  
except for the art of  
living with an apology  
lodged in my throat.  
Instead, I was born  
with my father's  
hands,  
forever taking  
apart  
things best left alone.

My grandmother's  
kohl-rimmed eyes  
still glide across the  
outskirts of my  
consciousness;  
willing me to  
forget,  
as I beg her to  
remember.  
Her tar coloured  
tears haemorrhage  
across decades and  
fall onto  
my face.

The hands of time  
are cruel,  
they refuse to  
linger.

Memories fizzle  
on my skin like  
cigarette burns,  
marking me  
as part of her  
legacy.

I spin red threads  
around my delicate frame as the moon melts  
off of the night  
time sky.

Like sheets of flame,  
remnants of my  
mother's girlhood  
engulf me whole.

On nights like these,  
I take a piece of glass and deepen the  
furrow in  
my father's brow,  
I don't do it  
intentionally  
ofcourse.  
I blame it on the wild woman.

The mahogany dresser my grandfather built  
with his creaking hands is all that remains  
of his tarnished legacy. Some nights  
I've seen my mother  
crawl inside of it  
and disappear,  
praying to a fickle  
human sized  
God to let  
her back home.

*Fasiha Irfan*

*always not it*

trudging the tooth with tongue,  
i speak (to) the voice that passes.  
this wind with lips and a mouth  
whispers itself – all is given.

crawl to the corner of my thoughts,  
and still the remnant remains,  
the still sight of the tip unsaid  
sickens itself:

but the still site is nowhere to be found,  
and everywhere to resound the crack  
in this ground.

so it carries from ear to ear  
the secret of the word –  
the range of meaning is etched  
on the poor sound it shows.

and it whispers into the silence of its wave  
that which is always (not) it.  
is it nowhere to be found?  
is it always not around?

*Moaz Ahmed Siddiqui*

*Dear Juliet*

Oh Juliet, what a fool's mistake yours was.  
To rebuke Romeo's oath of love  
Sworn on Selene herself.

You deride my lady in the sky  
She hears your ridicule  
Hanging suspended in the sky  
In her ivory glory

Accuse her all you want.  
Call her prone to change  
Till your heart's sated.

But Juliet, will you ever understand?  
Life is all about change.  
Breaks my heart you didn't live long enough child, to ever know.

I wonder if she mourned you,  
Selene who feels so much,  
For the ones she watches over  
What would she think of you, foolish Juliet?

It must have been your destiny  
To be a beautiful butterfly  
Did it take you twenty eight days to break your shell

Did she think you and her similar?  
It takes her twenty eight days too  
To complete her eternal cycle.

Envious, I am of you Juliet  
You went to Romeo so quick.  
Even the few moments apart were unbearable were they not?

Think then child, the eons of separation I endured.  
To look upon my love but never meet.  
Would you still ridicule my Selene,  
Knowing her pain and mine.

*Wajiha Qamar, 1st Year, Morning*

the spiralling soul that awakens death  
drying the oasis of decaying blood  
drink from the chalice, a drop no less,  
a gentle tsunami, a loving flood

crawl through the womb chipped and  
cracked,  
gnawing on a once loving limb,  
devour the ocean and your father's hat  
agony on the edge, a karmic brim.

*Rubab Amir, 2nd Year, Morning*

*at your knee*

Spitfire swords clash and cling  
In the light-years between us  
And I ask of you as you demand of me  
A freedom undeserved

The walls I intend to paint with my sin  
Lie on your shoulders, withering thin  
Will I hurt you if I blow too hard  
On the scorch marks decorating your skin?

Tragedy becomes us in this house so old  
Each brick dipped in purpose to behold  
The cosmic mess of my misdeeds that  
spasms in acts perverse and cold

Toil and tumor, your grand little shame  
What does your family think of my name?  
Their cyanide tongues must feel so raw  
against the bruises I soothed and maimed

*Maham Owais, 2nd Year, Morning*

*pull me away*

I never needed my voice till it was gone  
the hearts in your grave shriek until dawn  
thrashing and mumbling in hideous sound  
pull me away I can't be bound

hear the sonic symphonies of the wild  
fog in trees, mesmerizingly beguiled  
rustling of leaves and we're under siege  
pull me away I can't breathe

cross my heaving heart upon yours  
and beg for mercy until we're sore  
you reek of sin that she endures  
pull me away from this twisted lore

mutilated madness in her darkened tomb  
a feast of dissent you compulsively consume  
baths of red and sheets you bleach  
pull me away before they reach

*Maham Owais, 2nd Year, Morning*

You don't understand  
If I don't laugh I'll cry  
The empty spaces of today  
If I don't scribble it'll fade  
If I don't constantly leave marks of my existence  
The slipping time will erase me  
The slumber that calls me  
The oblivion that awaits me  
The future that's dying  
Do you feel it  
The feeling of me –

*Aiza Malik, 2nd year, Evening*

From time to time,  
I fall back on my shadow and become a part of it.

Something that's always looming behind me,  
ready to pounce.

Its my distorted identity,  
rooted from beneath the ground.

No matter how far I run,  
I fall back like a clown.

I painted some colors on my face to look  
miserable, so they don't see a face that is more  
terrible. Sadly, when I try to fly and disconnect from  
my past I am hunted by the monsters, forced to unmask

'Stay grounded', they say.  
Sure, if only I had any love for my origins  
If only I had no dirty beginnings

*Still, everyday, I get up and try to run.*

*Shafia Yousuf, 3rd Year, Morning*

*An ode to Words that often Cut too Deep for Screams*

The bones hide and shove one or two  
wavelengths of asymmetric sounds,

the flesh, in an attempt, to cover its ear

is pressed,  
Red.

Behind the bar, a heart pretending it doesn't  
care, beats  
& I, despite the creaking of the bones,  
heard it.

*Areesha Khan, 3rd Year, Morning*

The rot takes root,  
The mold takes hold,  
The sick is conceived,  
Something does always come from the outside  
Like with all births.  
Leeches off of me  
Drinks its fill  
In big gulps  
I don't have much to offer anyway  
Or so I think.  
I think too much but never enough  
Nothing of any importance  
My bliss, my infection  
Both come from outside  
But who let it in?  
I knew it,  
It's an inside job.

*Bushra Naz, 3rd Year, Morning*

## *My Calypso*

We were on the soggy deck  
Water splashed steady, unerringly  
Like water does  
It was a fated day aboard the Black Pearl  
They called out, my Calypso  
That you'll be released from these human bonds  
If told so in the voice of a lover  
You were tied up to the mast  
First the captain tried, then all men followed  
But none to any avail  
I was there too, my Calypso  
Watching from the shadows the broad daylight casts  
I was a lover but with no chance  
For before I could even take your name  
I would have to prove if my love was allowed to exist  
My Calypso, my Calypso  
What more proof  
What testimony  
Of this amorous purity  
That it beats against the tides of nature  
Against rules  
Against expectations  
Unmotivated  
For Kraken's sake my love is a sin  
What more reason, my Calypso, my goddess  
So hear now  
I release you from your human bonds  
I, your lover, release you from your human bonds.

*Bushra Naz, 3rd Year, Morning*

### *When I Said Goodbye*

A dainty pink slipper, the dearest plastic  
The glittery gloves mother bought  
Pretty prisessey, now if you ask me  
The cricket cap, size four, that father got.  
With Mr. Freckles, the cuddle toy I won free  
I left them on a shelf, sitting happy in my memory  
It hadn't occurred yet to wonder why  
So I smiled as I waved goodbye.

Soon I was nine,  
Every morning the bus would arrive  
Four kisses to Sister  
New friends, new school, new city  
Life was clockwork — fairly busy  
Until the hand broke one morning  
A tricycle turned bi  
To my friends, my teachers,  
And the river I used to dance along;  
To London I never got to say goodbye.

A shift in our plight overnight,  
Three cities and several flights  
Somewhere along, four houses I lost  
Some gardens and some trees  
None as dear as the *gulmohar* rising tall  
Meeting me in my precious balcony.  
One comes close, perhaps — shook asunder  
the banana tree I read under;  
Leaves to the ground,  
Shade vanished and a hole left profound.  
If only death allowed thought it would know  
I remained unmoving by the window,  
Performing the last rites  
— whispering my goodbyes.

To the many lavenders and rosy bails  
My bunch of daffodils and budding jasmines pure  
How I would give anything to spend  
One more night basking in your scent!  
Yet, as it goes, to all you and more,  
I only really remember a sigh:  
'Must I always bid goodbye?'

I couldn't forget if I tried  
The round ball of grey-white fur  
I lost before I could see grow.  
To my most precious silver  
I urged myself to throw;  
Tossed straight into the sea,  
To float eternally  
(perchance it would reach familiar shores;  
travel to places long longed for)  
— and at last to Family,  
I'm sorry I never even faked a cry,  
When the time came to say goodbye.

*Duaa Azim, 3rd Year, Morning*

### *Absurd I*

I, a being, what my worthiness?  
Ruled, Taught, Commanded  
Why must I be conscious then?  
Fate decided or meaning absurd  
Heaven there, then why must exist beauty temptatious?  
Why Hell-bent for hell to exist?  
And, why I be a witch and sinner too?  
Why must I search...causes to be equal?  
If not fated to have dilemma sorted,  
Why must I exist, and then be conscious then?

### *A. Fouzai*

### *Saccharine*

Tender:  
Like an exposed nerve of a tooth,  
I ache to the gentlest touch.  
Carrying nothing but the weight of  
The perpetual emptiness inside.  
For no amount of love is ever  
Enough  
To fill  
This void  
Perhaps i was born incomplete;  
Ejected from my cocoon too soon  
So my wings remain shriveled.

At times, I am  
Malleable  
Like wet clay,  
Searching for the perfect mold  
That could shape the things I feel.  
Or I become a sponge,  
Absorbing  
Every existing human emotion  
Till I'm soaked  
I'm merely half a person:  
A fragment.

*Qasim Ali, M.A. Final, Evening*

You are gone,  
But your aura is instilled in our  
hearts.

How can we forget the way your presence made everyone feel present?

Now all the filled rooms are left  
silent,

And even the children can feel your absence.  
For your existence was the bond that held us together,  
Like the trees that hold all the leaves in spring.

But the Fall that came with your fall has dried us all away.

Because your persona is etched in our  
lives,

Like a beautiful memory which will stay with us till we die.

We cannot come to terms with your  
demise,

And it feels like your departure is a lost scent  
That withers away with time  
But gets stuck at the back of our minds

*Syeda Dua Fatima, M.A. Final, Morning*

Oh Eve! The slender is reserved for the bones that reside within your rotting flesh  
In crevices that hide beneath your filthy feet  
When time brings you misery you bow down to it  
whether it takes or give  
you bow down to it

Oh daughter of Eve! You shall restore all that your mother lost  
Bring back what she betrayed for the taste of a fruit  
The honor that lies in your sweet tooth  
you stop when the clock tells you  
You bow down to it, every single time  
You bow down to it

Oh daughters! Symphony of the lost, have mercy upon your own  
You are made from the finest seeds of the finest trees  
For you, never had the gift of shame  
But will it last you another day  
If you dont bow down to it's ticking gaze?

Oh lost daughters! You will remain in the alms  
In the streets where no one ever enters or leaves  
In a sick man's cabin, in a poor woman's soul  
Are there any footsteps you need to follow  
The ones before you banished already  
For they never bowed down before time and  
Eve's ruthless rage that lives inside every daughter's chest.

*Raafia Manzar, M.A. Final, Evening*

*The miracle of life*

Peace refuses to make love to me anymore.  
Calamity, on the other hand, devours and taints my feeble old bones.  
I wanted to feel the warmth of my mother's womb,  
yet all I heard were the terrified shrieks when I split her in two.  
Clawing and gnawing my way out through her chutes,  
Reducing her essence to a meek little hue.

My peace, my love, my innocence, I have no name for you my past existence  
You engulfed me as a stranger, then you smothered your remembrance,  
Such tender cruelty, to take your memories away from me.  
I scoured for your comfort, but these dark and gritty chasms,  
were the only remnants, I could find, of your presence

The endless pit in my guts beg me to embrace you,  
but nature itself deems you to find me repugnant.  
For I have started to become sanctimoniously repulsive  
Bloodied and battered, stinking of after-birth  
An abnormal conscience... like all others in this universe.

*Rameen Imran, M.A. Final, Evening*

*The abandoned Carousel*

In the foggiest of nights  
Made from the denseness of sighs  
A carousel of marionettes, goes round and round  
Sweet marble dolls flipping about,  
Wearing thorns leaking venom on their pretty little brows.

A lull so deep, it weighs over sleep  
A fine little blanket draped these figurines  
Heavier are the sheets, soaking the sea  
Of unanswered dreams. Lost, to be free.  
Plunge into me, the obsidian. Release.

The wind on the carousel is rot and stale,  
The poised little dolly is chipped and dazed  
Her little head hurts when lights come ablaze  
She hates the soft jingle, and that terribly loud blare

Those porcelain waists with their cracked painted nails,  
unable to escape, or even embrace their fate  
Condemned to a song of sickly sweet smiles  
Forever in a loop; wreathing their own special noose.

*Rameen Imran, M.A. Final, Evening*

Too much for symmetry  
Rectangular coffin blocks  
With flashes trapped inside.  
Snippets of possibilities caged  
Measured squares of concrete  
Lifeless yet filled to the brim.

From there, within will then  
the muse finally arise?  
and shine a nascent light  
that burns bright and blinds?

it only unveils a staircase to hell  
which amuses and allures  
with flickers of a missing gaze  
and curvatures of a dead smile.

I follow it tied – blind  
down and down – I go  
Tumbling, scratching, falling  
Until the shades of agony  
have crept and nestled inside.

Painted in hues of eternal damnation  
Again I dance a dance  
of faltering missteps and miscarried breaths  
On a land – gone grey  
grown old, dreary and stale.

Alas I am forever late and – i fail  
For I fall for the appearances  
And escape the reality dealt my way.

*Zonera Asim, M.A. Final, Morning*

like a fish I swim and swim and swim  
in search of a shore, i am unsure of  
    a shore, i could finally anchor in,  
    a shore, i will forever fall short of

with words that perchance I could say  
    would finally bring the storms at bay  
but there is a barrier that must break

yet all I do is wait and wait and wait.

something always shifts and disperses  
and the more I try to cautiously place it  
    the more it slips and then – escapes

and i–

i will annihilate trying to encapsulate it  
take it in and completely metamorphose;  
become one with the harmonious whole

so all I do is  
swim and swim and swim away

*Zonera Asim, M.A. Final, Morning*

Monologue/Non-monologue and some descriptions. Will they be of help? I doubt that.  
For all origins remain inaccessible.

"لہر" ہے وقت یا لمحہ - کوئی یاد -  
(") کہتے ہیں عام بات چیت میں جو بھی کچھ کہو -  
کوئی نہ بات چیت سمجھیں ہے -  
نہ ہی زبان -  
بے نظم - پڑھو، نہ پڑھو -

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"لہر لمحہ"

سمتِ فروز دشت کو گھلنا ہی تو ہے  
نوروز - - نو امید سے نہیں تو - -  
نکہت یار پر  
گرمیے نکہت - -  
پر بے سبب مٹ  
(بے سبب کس لہر بھلا رہتا ہے کچھ؟)

تیرے خرام سے - -  
شُتی ہے خاک - - [(- -) قدم قدم]  
قدم ہے آستانا  
آستانا کو ہم  
جاتے ہیں جس لہر  
لہر بیقرار -

لرزگی بھی کچھ بھلا آپ کو میں دوں؟

آپ ہی نے چاہی۔۔۔

لحوں کی لرزگی!

لحوں کی لرزگی۔ آستاں کی سمت

لرزگی جو دعینے کس لئے نہ ہم؟

لہر لمحہ ہم سے بہتا ہے (کہیں باہر ہی)

ہم سے ہے رفتہ رفتہ۔۔۔

وقت، یاد۔ سب

لہر لمحہ رفتگی سے کس سبب ملے؟

اور بیمار کر چلینے۔۔۔

راہ لہر (۔۔۔ ہم کو)۔ (۔۔۔) پر

لرزگی کیا دوں؟

یاد نہ رہے (! ! !)

جو یاد بھی نہیں

لہر لمحے سے ہم کو

یاد کچھ نہیں

مرزگی کو تالیئے۔

بہر خدا تالیئے۔۔۔

وہ آپ ہی تو ہیں

بندگی بھی لیجئے۔۔۔

باہر لمحے

(---) جتنی کچھ بھی ہے

ہائے! اس کافری کا بتا کیا ہی کریں؟

مارتے کیوں ہیں؟

فلان لہر میں چاہیئے گر---

مرگ بندگی۔

اس حکم کی کافری میں ہم ہی رہیں

---

فروزان جوتیری سیرت سے ہے گلشن تو اس صورت میں بس تیری ہی بات ہو۔ وہ باتیں۔۔۔ عام تھیں جو: پھر اس یک لرزگی میں مجھ کو ہی رہنے دو۔ لرزگی جو مانگنی تھی، خیر۔۔۔ کچھ اور ہی کریں۔ مجھ بے لہر لمحے کو فلاں بھر میں۔۔۔ چاک، بعد طمانجی لہر۔۔۔ میں کچھ پل تو رہوں۔ زبان سے وابستہ جو کچھ رہے۔ وہ سب، اس لہر۔۔۔ سمجھ سے ماوراء۔

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این شہزاد اعظم

شعبہ فلسفہ، ایم۔ اے۔ فائل

Your eyes, like a rusty mirror  
Resting deep inside a lost ocean,  
Seems contended and pacified.

Vigorless and languid, unconfronted by the guise of the horrid swells.  
Always in a disposition of baritone,  
Rising against the brassy emergence of the depth's ancient fears.

Mood, a window with a tempting closure masquerading faces of deterring fog.  
A cosmic dread poured out of a misty spectacle with a blemish sight of a sporadic dream.

Rifted by surface waters, a damp stratum rolled over the abyss.  
Upright perils and leveling bliss,  
Presence at a spot,  
Absence at a shot,  
Gazing Still.

Parallel drills,  
Drop and crop,  
Jolted breaths and halted dips  
Nearer and nearer to a distant flash  
Roaming between splashing and streaming,  
Far off and far off from an almost wink.

*Sayed Ali Akber, Department of Philosophy, M.A. Final*

آج سایہ اپنا رنگ بد لنا بھول گیا

اور میری مٹی اک نئی خوشبو سے محروم ہو گئی

میں دیوار پر دھوپ کے آخری نشان کو، تمہاری

کھڑکی تلک لے آیا ہوں

اور مجھے دو نیم برهنے بازوؤں کو دیکھو

کر، سورج کے پاؤں پر آنے والے چھالوں کا

کا یقین ہو گیا۔

ایک دوپٹہ کبھی کبھی پرندوں کی نیند میں محل ہو جاتا ہے،

اور پھلوں کو اپنی ہی خوشبو پہچانتے، میں

دقت پیش آنے لگتی ہے

تمہارے پہلو سے اگنے والی بیل

تمہارے ٹوٹے ہوئے گنگرو

اور تمہارے بالوں سے بنی جانے والی اکائیاں

ایک آسمان کو بولنا سکھا رہے ہیں

لیکن نجانے کیوں مجھے اپنی زبان بھولنے میں دیر لگ رہی ہے۔

سید علی اکبر

شعبہ فلسفہ، ایم۔ اے۔ فائل