

## Prologue: A Gift from Another

A bullet is shot...

The first thing that is perceived is the murderous intent.

The next is the stained image of wicked spikes.

The final is the deafening manifestation of hatred and ensuing echoes of decay.

Burdened by their feebleness,

a human only realizes what has been lost once a bullet has reaped flesh and imparted them with a wound...

My heart has been stolen by the unimaginative narrative.

The encumbered has stolen what was once mine.

My kindred spirit you realize we aren't that different.

Why have you gifted me with this pain?

Why must you stand so far when you decide to pull the trigger?

You look so cold when standing so far...

I don't recognize you.

Please just come closer.

Please just take a step towards me before you take something so meaningful from me.

Is there nothing to answer my pleas except the ringing in my ears?

Is there nothing to comfort me amidst this pain?

Have you already left me to bleed?

Have you deserted me without the solace of another?

No—

I still feel you here...

I still feel you here yet you still haven't taken a step forward.

Do you not have the urge to rush over to see what you have done?  
Do you not want to help another in their suffering?

No—  
of course, you don't.  
You were the gunman—  
but why haven't you left yet?

Someone who realized their mistake would take a step forward.  
Someone who was smart enough would take a step away from the destruction they caused.  
...so where does that leave you?

A coward who is frozen in fear? Are you shocked by who you harmed?

And yet you still stay quiet...  
You confuse me...

Who do you want to be?  
And why are you still here?

Do you want to be here for me?  
Don't you want to flee?

Take a step.  
Please take a step.  
I don't care in what direction but I need you to take a step.  
Either rip my tether to you or bring it closer so that I may savor it in my last moments.

You should know where you want to be after causing such distress.  
You should know better than to do this and be  
too cowardly to seek reparation and  
too cowardly to follow through on your criminal behavior.

I guess all that I can perceive from here is my sobbing soul...

I still remember when I gave you the gun...  
A barrel made from my passion.  
A magazine made from my love.  
Worst of all—the bullets made from my memories.

You wasted all those years and shot them all back at me.  
Do you not even flinch after giving all that back?  
You took my flesh yet what you have given me back is even worse.

But I realized something while sitting here all alone: I will not let these bullets fester.  
I will pluck each one of these out...  
I don't care if I bleed out and die...  
At least I won't die because of you...  
I will die because I decided to go my own way.

- Tayseer