A picture containing text, outdoor, nature, sunset

Description automatically generated

**A Thousand Seas Away:**

**A Poetry Book**

**Lian Essam**

A Falling, Screaming Rome[[1]](#footnote-1)

The sun of glory rose to the horizon of Rome

Crippling demons that roamed about

Honor was his eternal throne

Which rose, through life and death, to a timeless sky

A sacred melody stitched the scars of war

Painting its land with complex beauty

Its purity raged the fire within those veins

Breathing into the souls of masked demons

Caesar witnessed the fall of Rome

With the vicious cling of the dagger

When, translucent amidst the blur, stood the frame of Brutus

Ascending…like a tower of betrayal

As the blood surrendered to the ugly truth

His blood still does trickle in the memory

Of those deathly souls

With the loss of conscience

Carved within their minds

With the undying echo

Of a falling, screaming Rome…

A Heavenly Throng[[2]](#footnote-2)

A heavenly throng at my door

Makes my heart leap with joy

Their light, perfect upon the floor

“This is heaven”, my heart whispers to itself

Every shade of color glows in the dreaminess

Crimson glows red in my mystified eyes

And my face unknowingly grins with happiness

Making the sun of my soul rise

A Lustrous Miracle[[3]](#footnote-3)

A little lustrous miracle

Far, far away

At the crown of the world

Sending childhood hymns with every ray

Through blankets of cloud godly secrets seep

Of why we’re here, or treasures of the deep

Tales of the night ripple down the sky

To be told to the standing trees up high

A Muffled Goodbye[[4]](#footnote-4)

A child’s eye watches with a dying soul

The fog of the throttling unknown

Of the frothing chase of death

That lay in the air…obscure

With terror a heart can’t hold

Unless it died beating

And bled its inexplicable pain

As the blood trickled into a last surrender

So this was his muffled goodbye

Smothered in the mirthless air

Which seized all dreams and hopes

Before they were born

A Reckless Call[[5]](#footnote-5)

I glanced at the timid clouds

Where life shared my shadowed doubts

But my young, silenced soul screamed in the pristine sky

A reckless call that rendered me alive

The gentle breeze led my whims in beautiful array

& blew the old, sickening terror away

But the echo of the turning latchkey

Chased my dreams into hollow darkness

I would never be free

I was still bound to his harness

A Rose in the Breeze[[6]](#footnote-6)

A rose in the breeze

Flailed within the horizon of our days

It petals rippling with graceful ease

Searing the skyline with a dancing blaze

Its petals fell upon our cheeks

Like angels that float with tranquil wings

All what that rose seeks

Is to feel the light of bliss

Anchored to the beats of hearts

As they join the rose in the breeze

In its lullaby of joy and love

Which echoes along its realm

Everlasting and timeless as it is…

A Scene of Grace and Pain

A flame wailed into the night

As the silhouette of modern Baghdad sharpened

The palms’ daring arch pointed to the sky

As the reflection of that flame glowed

Upon the surface of the rippling Tigris waters

A sacred phantom of mingling blood and war rose

From the stark glare of the wailing flame

As the dancing waters polished that phantom

Leaving a strange scene of grace and pain

A troubled sway embraced the waters

As they reflected the nation’s fiendish truth

With the ghosts of the forgotten dead

Embedded without thought or ruth

But within the waters’ flickers

Trembled anguished memories of happiness

Longing for a miracle

And bearing the last specks of earthly hope

A Tender Haven[[7]](#footnote-7)

Your warm voice strokes my heart

And crumbles my absent soul

Into sad submission, as reality slowly floats apart

And reveals a tender haven that had always waited for me, after all

I thrust my hand away from Time’s firm grasp

And lay upon the heather of your fervent passion,

That caressed my crawling fears away

& showered my world with a perfect light

It seemed so close, yet so far

For after a moment,

The flailing heather was a mere silhouette

In the distant horizon of my soul

And the flickering light held its sanctuary

A patch of my heart that I would yearn for…

A Thousand Seas Away[[8]](#footnote-8)

As I saw the gentle scenery  
Of a clear sky in its slumber  
My heart’s surge dove into itself  
Into its fragile, forgotten chambers  
Then I finally knew where the heart of me  
Had forsaken me to  
Distant in the warm blur of the past’s dream  
I saw your angelic figure  
The noises around mere sad echoes  
Sunken in an untouchable sheet  
The tears fell like futile pleas  
To clasp this moment and somehow go back to it  
But the distance was of a thousand seas  
Leaving my heart broken, my eyes tear-dimmed

A World of Wonder[[9]](#footnote-9)

Amidst the buzz of the crowd

I split my book open

That’s when the vast, twinkling shroud

Masks a world of wonder, unspoken

That world of wonder

Lures me off my chair

Into a bewitching castle-

Where floating candles flicker

Tossing merriness unto succulent feasts

Where hushes of swirling destiny

Hide behind seamless magic-

& Among a blanket of motherly heather

& a ruffle of young foliage

Guided by a reckless wind

Where charring vestiges of vengeance

Blow along

Needled with wounded love…

All of this

Seeps from the still pages

Filling my senses with bliss

Away from boredom’s cages

Along the Tide of Toil We Drift On

Along the tide of toil we drift on, within the tumult of life drowned

Looking above us, our eyes channeling our dreams

Hoping the ripples of destiny to embrace what our eyes resound

But the artistry of drawn paths is not as carefree as it seems

We push ourselves along with our rigorous stream of giving

Trying to savor the pleasures of living

As we try to mould our ways

Hoping they shine with our old dreams’ rays

Then through one frantic eye we look as one

Seeing if our rapid paces

Eluded the storm of idle doom that at us chases

When will we ever stop?

When will the pieces of us

Stop flailing away as remnants of sacrifice?

I guess we’ll never know

How long we’ll last in this gentle woe…

Amira[[10]](#footnote-10)

Beautiful, medium-length, sweeping hair

Her eyebrows as beautiful as fresh heather

& a laugh forever etched

Upon an innocent face

An Afternoon Scene

Like a fireplace in some depth

Of an autumn leaf

Was the sunset’s incense

Floating us in otherworldly relief

Everything was heavenly

The way the warmest light fell onto the pale tiles

The drifting clouds painting the curtains

An afternoon scene entrancing the mind’s lies

An Angel[[11]](#footnote-11)

An angel spreading joyous light

Filling every heart with delight

No matter where she swept

A smile would be left

A voice caressed by an angel’s wing

When she speaks, it would softly sing

Oh…what beauty adorns your sacred name

You brought blessings to us when you came…

An Eternal Pain[[12]](#footnote-12)

How swiftly life blew me about

A manner so heedless to the pain’s thudding weights

I was stripped of that last, lingering doubt

Before leaving the place where my soul resides

A fickle scheme, blinded me from how the most painful goodbye seems

When it was right in front of me

Winking at my round, naïve eye, telling me it’s not yet goodbye

Weakly fooled by the meadow of a life I once had

Only to feel the fallen mountain of what I left behind,

On my small beating heart

That grew among those walls and leaves

& injected the flashing scenes of the place onto its walls

Breathing into the soul of an eternal pain

Tiring its binding muscles

The ghosts of the unknowing faces I adored

That I still had poetry to utter to

& cascades of love to disclose to

Resting in my soul

& the fact that I just walked away,

Away from the ones I would die with whom to stay

To a long time where they would make me smile and cry

Only in my mind

Playing the most painful lullaby

Echoing within my hollow heart

Anxiety[[13]](#footnote-13)

A cold, dark creature

Slithering slowly into my chest

Sucking the life out of my blood

So it would turn into a smoking black

Sleeping in me for an eternity

Where my weak tears would fall

Painting horrors in my dreams

Then I would wake to a raven's call

As One[[14]](#footnote-14)

Let’s all stand as one

And adorn our earth

Let’s get inspired by the clearness of the sun

To contribute to the epic birth

Of a seamless eternity

Woven from thoughts so sublime

That unearth genuine human dignity

From the grand frame of time

Let’s follow the tune of the human song

That springs from our colorful hearts

Let’s see where we truly belong

Beyond what sets us apart

Behind

What lies behind

Is what confounds the mind and soul

Some voices our memory can’t rewind

Some smiles behind which lie beating woes

A swirl of caprice

May hide behind a laugh

Hiding behind a carpet of innocence

That bewilders the prying eyes

Behind a look, lie a thousand troubles condemned

Behind a cry, lies a whim played by tears, none to mend

Behind a cluster of clouds and thunder

Floats a kindling sun

And through the moon yonder

Lives of perished souls might have just begun

Bipolar[[15]](#footnote-15)

Neon sirens

Sending blinding flashes

Into my neurons

My head in alarm mode

No sleep for today

Or the next two days

Get your brain

And throw it hard into glass

Split in half

Either flying in a manic sky

Inked dark by fiends

And shaking with a demon’s laugh

Or digging deep into the earth

Until it reaches darkness

Bloody ladies scratching at your veins

& welcoming you

Home

Brooding Pain[[16]](#footnote-16)

Sitting motionless in a cold, hazy world

In an empty trance beyond the broken dream

Its helpless tears trickling into my lonely path

I turn my eyes to the jacket abandoned in the cold

Shivering for its long-lost warmth, I get to my feet

The humble beacon on the hook desperately nearing

Feeling homesick as I observe it covered in the cruel snow

The memories it once bathed in smiling beneath at me

Like finding a piece of my wounded heart, I pull it off the hook

Helpless and limp

Wear it and draw it close upon me

Then, I close my eyes

Tightly embracing it

My orphaned soul gasping as it found its warmth

Sadly trembling in longing

The memories warming me, but just beyond my reach

I painfully realize, at the calm waves of time by the shore

Just the precious, transcendent warmth this jacket bore…

Dad’s Wallet

A small, humble piece

Of your very soul

Leatherbound and precious

Where the light of your heart resides

Where stories would walk along its creases

Of endless love that never ceases

Darkness[[17]](#footnote-17)

Rattling breaths, swarming my chest

When life becomes raw

Like an egg yolk

Fearsome terror, darker than the darkest Death Reaper

Darkness into Art

Through all the storms of broken promises

Lost hopes in the dust

Heartstrings fly unbidden

Beating

Living

Curling into pensive poems

Or notes of heavy tunes...

Turning disappointment into dark dreams

Shining ever so brilliant in the deep

Turning tears to shining streams

Letting the pain from every crease seep

Turning darkness into art

Dementors

Ghostly figures floating about

Sucking the life out

Of every single thing that stood

In the way of their hoods

Dark, hollow skulls sunken deep within

One drifted absently towards me

Twisting its head close to mine

Looking at me with eerie stillness

Blowing into my cold face

Haunting me in the mute air…

Dios[[18]](#footnote-18)

In the sky of Argentina your unusual soul rose

Your bold, dreamy spirit numbing the dim dangers

Of narrow, cobbled streets teeming with woes

Heedless to the thirst for light and perils of dark strangers

As if destined by God’s sensible eyes

To a land hollowed of gracious dreams

A body with this sheer magic from the skies

Flowing as a deep spring into wild, gushing streams

& a selfless, fearless heart, courage echoed in its very beat

Undaunted love flowing deep within its blood, making it pound

Yet he can still be a child, forgetting he’s the man the world couldn’t defeat

His heart a refuge for the unfortunate where no other would be found

We can’t bear that your timeless face, warm eyes, and miraculous soul

Have been smothered forever, leaving our lonely hearts bleed in the coldest abyss

Evil Gods[[19]](#footnote-19)

Your heart sunk at the first mention of me

You forced the paint of my dreams with your claws

Into hollowed shades following a hell of mediocrity

Where my dreams’ extinction would be defined by a plastic fan

Its pathetic buzz evocative of the black slime you shoved my face into

Endlessly echoing along the small room…

You shoved my pretty red heart into the hands of evil gods

Masked by mortal faces

Their deep wrinkles sinking into their skin

Just like daggers of wicked age

You snuffed every spark in my eye

You stomped on every flower that attempted to bloom

With your eternally dark boot

That even heavenly lights can’t pass through

You breathed bruises upon me

Sinking deep into my soul

My flesh

That no one can ever console

I’ll rejoice at your final breath…

Goodbyes[[20]](#footnote-20)

Your angelic voice

The streaming Baghdad waters

What on earth did I do?

To deserve your goodbyes

To live a million miles away

To be dragged away on my heart’s blood

And on my slowly, painfully streaming tears

When all I wanted was to stay

The morning dew would fall

The marked dew of goodbye

& I would wake to a grey, cold morning

Rigid in the heart

Then this numb disappointment would fill me up

& I would go to them

Their tight hugs and tears daggering my heart

Where it would just never be enough

I would walk away

To years, of another life

Home[[21]](#footnote-21)

I miss the very tiles

The tight walkways

The empty water tanks that lined them

The voice of everyone calling “Lulu!”

Untitled[[22]](#footnote-22)

The magic carpet of my soul

Has been gliding

Far, far away from me

Human[[23]](#footnote-23)

What a weak shroud holds us

Elusive echoing haze sucking its luster with time

Until it was just a face

With distinctive features

Hollowed by life’s power

The same shroud that was once a blinding light

Flickering with a childish dream

Defying everything

Almost heavenly

What a frail heart beats within

Where strength is most needed

Where our being is

Beats for things that life blows to dust

For things long gone

So that it only beats for the pain’s symphony

When revived

Otherwise it just reclines with its strings

If Earth Could Speak

If only the soil and sands

Could writhe in anger

If only a naïve voice embraced the boundless lands

To paint the fathomless ache of nature

Then, the earth would gnaw at our feet

Its core would unleash its fuming heat

To shield its ancient solitude

To mend its graceful, timeless legends

Fellow human, heal our motherly land

Ease its pain and make it grand!

If Only

We live steadily on

The world’s stream makes us run

Barely missing the essence of those precious souls

The feeble and beautiful essence just hovering above us

We’d bet its strong soul to somehow last for so long

Thinking eternity would accompany its timeless song

Not knowing that timeless loving grace might come from a perishing face

That timelessness is created from such a vulnerable place

Like a sunset never to be repeated sinking to perish in the horizon

If only, if only we knew…

We’d say during that moment of pensive rue

That what we thought was an eternal blaze was actually a feeble warmth

That those moments of wonder might have been the last spluttering beacon

Of the dying ember of that luminous soul…

If only, we’d repeat

We just slowed down and slowly listened to that loved soul’s beats

Closing our eyes more tightly with every beat, knowing it got more precious, knowing it would sooner cease

If only we’d say again

As we lumber in our minds to that long-lost moment we abandoned

The pain of what’s lost forever stabbing the very soul

We talked for a little longer

About more matters

Laughed more for the night

Ventured into each other’s pasts

Stayed for longer in that moon-bathed kitchen

& spoke of our beautiful torments

If only…

We revealed what we thought were dramatic sentiments belonging to a later time…

& held hands.. and for long

Because life is a sweeping tempest and we don’t know which of us it may blow away

If only

We did all the things in the world

Because you and I had all the spark

If only on one of my ignorant days I just paused… and went to you

Back when your beats were strong and wouldn’t perish

If only

If only

Our breathless lips would mutter

Surviving on those beautiful, numbered memories

Held tight in the trembling palms of our souls…forever

If Wishes Were Granted[[24]](#footnote-24)

It was heaven, I would say

Seeing the angel of you in the light of day

A sight my heart would always be holding

Still remember the unmistakable perfection that lay

Reflecting off you in every ray

I tell myself, “Here’s kindness and love glowing”

If wishes were granted, I would pray

To go back, not to turn one angle away

To savor your heavenly light as it was shining

& walk only towards you, to hold you close to my heart

Khayal’s Legend[[25]](#footnote-25)  
  
Sometimes, I sit in sheer wonder  
To unearth the source of your angelic traits  
But that means I would have to forever ponder  
Because they were there since your soul landed upon Life’s gates  
  
All that submerge your legend are merry stories  
An imposing, timeless face  
A gush of blissful mirth, a kind breeze  
& all the heavens’ store of grace  
  
& those words are mere trickles of hint  
That lead to your mystifying realm of good  
& its passersby must have felt its glint  
Yet I’m the one who tried to express what no words could

A picture containing person, child

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La Pulga[[26]](#footnote-26)

An alien

Who walks among us

And plays with humans

Moments of sheer genius

Secretive, like whispered magic

Leaving the greats daunted in its wake

A miracle in human form

Where the impossible is his norm

Abnormal play

Led by what the gods say

Beautiful madness

Played with impossible ease

Every move, a crazy miracle sent from the sky

Calculated by his godly mind…

Layal of Love[[27]](#footnote-27)

Your eyes are as fresh as heather

Your features’ beauty is as old as time

But your soul

Oh your soul

Your baby soul, your soul of light, your soul of love

Lives eternally in the backbone of mine

The words end up speechless in my throat

& the ink of my pen dries up in sheer confusion

When it describes my love to you

You are the baby of my life

The six years without you were dark

Then, like a cherub of heaven, you descended to us…

I would die every day for you

Once from a crash

The other from a fire

Just so I can be with you

Your messiah beauty

Was there from the start

Oh my Layal

Layal of Love

How lucky I am to be with you

I love you forever…

Life

It bore looks of blooming realizations

Tumults of flashing revelations

Tears of joy gently fell upon its earth

Whispers of solemn prayers filled its still air

You see, Life is but a canvas

It lets its sheltered souls

Wander solely on their own

Into Destiny’s open arms

With but a paintbrush clasped in mystical fingers

That wraps

Every speck of triumphant light

Every shade of darkness

Every tear of the complex eye

& every whiff of love

Into its timeless bristles…

Like Ladies and Lords

Like ladies and lords

Flail the gentle, purple heather

To the secret tune in the air

Defeating every poet’s despair

Little Dominoes

I will set my feet hard

Against the soil of pain and the waves of time

As I remember my abandoned childhood yard

Weakly wondering what sort of crime

I had done to deserve all the stitches of goodbye

Etched deep into my heart

Now I know I can’t fly too high

Because that’s where life would decide I have to part

The childish hue in your voice

The way the warm chalk would embrace the door

Life never granted me the choice

To savor that old Iraqi floor

Before I would leave it forever…

Precious faces beyond my reach

Sweeping in a river away from me

In a painfully idle stream

Unaware of my torn-apart heart

It just doesn’t make sense

How the very things that give me life

Fall, one by one, like little dominoes

Their successive falls leaving fearful echoes in my mind

Forever…

Marble Tragedy[[28]](#footnote-28)

Along the marble perfection of her skin

Lingering tragedy plays its eternal din

Upon her slumbering eyes,

Pain waits to wedge through dreams and lies

Lies so sweet that Pain’s crudest fist that has ever been

Fails to fathom where, and how, to begin

A picture containing building, sculpture, stone

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Mum

The happiest angels flicker by your smile

To see a glimpse of you I would walk every mile

I forget about my world when you laugh

Wherever you go, you take a part of me with you

The house only feels right when you’re in it

The keeper of my secrets

The sailor of my destiny

I would die a thousand times just to be with you

My Car Window

The window to my darkest and brightest whims

Embracing every humble tree as it passed

The small surface that welcomed my streaming thoughts

The sea where my all my favorite tunes met

And clashed in one great melody

Where I would decide to sink my head in for some time

Dreaming

Floating out into the mystic wild

My Heart’s Home[[29]](#footnote-29)

As I sat pensive on a small wall

Observing the lights of toil’s luminous tide

Racing time on an indefinite highway

There was nothing else to recall

As I eluded the tide for once

Except the void of my heart’s home

You

Trying to embrace the phantom of what I can’t let go

But then I weakly recline

As the void descends deeper within

& look across the night sky’s starry solace

& stay still

Letting my mind travel across the dark world’s vastness

Storms, raging seas, lighthouses, and harsh borders

Somehow locating you somewhere

Just to feel that you’re there

My Lighthouse Steed

A vision of bliss takes me among moors

Where breezes of solace daze the being that broods

Where all that makes a bustle

Is the hair, cloth, and leaves’ whispering rustle

Then a mane ruffles into view

I am heaved by a silent steed

Like a naive loner, its paces were of pensive hue

Yet its lighthouse aura was beyond its heed;

Its coat, an eternal furnace;

Its carved magnificence harbors me

& Cripples the night’s fearful, telltale thunder

Like one gentle beast only my heart can see

I, once the heaviest mass of dragging darkness

Felt like a pristine soul horseback

I eluded our world’s leering sharpness

Ascended to the wafts of a carefree world

My Pain’s Symphony[[30]](#footnote-30)

My soul dormant in white clouds

Then everything seeps in, my pain’s symphony;

This fourteen-year familiarity everywhere in the air

The beige hue of the tiles a somber blur

The staircase that spiraled over my soul for centuries

My fellow black couch, my best friend

The countless Romantic reflections

That I never knew my soul would need

The precious, nameless faces of the children

The sunrays on their faces now an orphaned, forsaken shade

The classroom

In all its normality

The carving of my soul

My desk, my own beacon

That kept me warm for a lifetime

The place I would lie my head and hold

In my final hour

Leaving my soul in a raging storm

Shattered

But alive

My Ruins[[31]](#footnote-31)

That dark day

The day I was delivered to the very pit of Darkness

Where I was forced to shed my human skin

& enter with but a feeble system to keep me breathing

My mind’s mania painting horrors in every face, every corner…

The women clad in estranging blue

This cold, alienating hue

They would hastily push me in my hospital cart

Bare me and attach weird strings to my chest

Talking in a strange language

Like satanists eluding the world’s eyes..

To my shattered, unchained mind

Then in the dead of the night

At the heart of Terror’s black apple

I would crawl on the cold floor

Led by my disaster-sharpened mind

All the way to the exit door

Shaking it hard to no avail

Realizing how thick the snare of my nightmare was

Pills of every color

Forcibly sucked into my body

Leaving behind a trail of flailing hair

Like dying autumn leaves

A trail of a pathetic, sad tale

Phone rings summoning my wide-awake phantom from side to side

The ash-lined profanities on the courtyard wall

Leaving behind empty ashtrays…

The only single dew

Passing my ruins was you

A mere reflection…

Painted by a mind starved of you…

My Tranquil Heaven[[32]](#footnote-32)

All I want

Is to be with you

Be a child again

As the sun rays wash the scene

In the park’s playground

And have you hold me

In the end of the yellow slide

It would be my own tranquil heaven

Where the only ones I have with me

Are the sun, you, and the motherly tree

The rustling leaves meandering down

Like little poems in homely brown

Showering your smiling face

Which is drawn by God’s grace

Where no fears can ever loom

And take me to their crippling doom

We could sit among the meadows

That sing like delicate maidens

And swim into our dreamy pasts

And talk till sunset embraces the sky

And casts its timeless paint

As the sun bids us farewell

This is all my soul would ever need

Where all my earthly pains would be freed

That’s what my heart yearns for

Along with the rivers of wine

And the mansions that go past the breadth of time

Our Fiery Freedom[[33]](#footnote-33)

God’s grace paints our chests

Where lives find their solace

Our hands carry the love of centuries

Where mountains of darkness melt away

The eternal sun shines for our naïve eyes

Yet our dignity outlives the magic of dawn

Our firm silhouette prevails over the fangs of hell

Even its dark crimson bowels can’t bring us down

But it paints our fiery freedom

That burns ever so madly along the bridges of time

Yet its grace is as old as rhyme

Our Own Utopia[[34]](#footnote-34)

Your voice whispers to me in the wind

Capturing my sharpest senses

Lifting my soul afloat

Telling me everything will be okay

But I'd rather stop and stay

Wait for your childlike voice to call me again

To paint our shielded heaven around me

With all its violet heather and light rain

Wrapping me with your poems and tales

And wait for you to come

To touch my fears numb

And hold me in your endless arms

In our own Utopia

Over Here[[35]](#footnote-35)

Entering the huge restaurant door

My hunger getting more and more

As I enter, I see a bright floor

The shiny lights, the tons of people,

The aromatic plates, between the waitresses’ hands

Makes me want to snatch them and

Finally, I reach the cashier

After I order I wait for the words “Over Here!”

With the great power of hunger

Five minutes became twenty minutes

Suddenly, *ring ring ring*

The bells comforting me and telling me

Your meal is Over Here!

Prayers

Prayers sway with magical motion

Rising with beautiful devotion

Whispers with a secretive, golden hue

Slowly driven towards the sky

Past serene clouds and raging ones

Past rainbows and thunder

By a miraculous, angelic force

Messenger angels reside by every cloud

Tending to every broken heart

To every prayer

Sanctuary of Salvation

If only existed a transparent, levitating room

Dubbed with godly, self-effacing light

A room where no darkness can ever loom

A place eluding earth’s dragging pains and plights

A sanctuary where angels reside

& lend their ears

By the slow surges of pain

In the soul, right until it heals…

Seething Questions[[36]](#footnote-36)

Where did you go?

What is the essence of that portal you left me for?

It’s as if your destiny has been dragged

By crippling supernatural hands

Into a deserted pit

Severed from every worldly being

A pit where all of you;

Your smile, face, touch, voice, and spirit-

The spirit that slipped from my frantic, desperate embrace

The embrace I thought would pervade any foreign power-

Betrayed me into falling in…

It’s as if you wanted to

And I know what I say would betray your loving legend

But that’s what my anguished, grief-stricken heart has confessed

With its wrathful beats of agony

That echo along my chest

With a flow of seething questions

*What is it about that pit that lured*

*Your soul, your stout body*

*Into yielding to its mirthless darkness?*

Away from every hue of love

That illuminated your veins

Through every passing day

And through every fleeting year…

Away from a cluster of carefree memories

That is now left with cold haze

That you left in your wake

Silence

All I need is silence

This thoughtful silence

Where you can hear the reverberating complexities

Of the heart

Where I can hear the bold broth of my secret pool

Hidden in the deepest patch of the silent soul

This silence that unfolds the fog

Of this tumultuous world

A person sitting on a couch

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Smile to the Rain

Shoot for the stars

And smile to the pitter-patter of the rain

That falls onto your soul’s pane

It may blur some light

It may mask some dreams

But squint into the drops’ night

For reflected in the drops are beams

There for the seekers to see

Then the breeze will come

And the drops will trickle

Softly along with feet so numb

With the light of the rising sun

Leaving a wake

Full of pure truth

When all doubts break

and when the soul blooms with youth

The Angel[[37]](#footnote-37)

The Angel crawls along

With a glint of excitement in his eyes

And with passion

Like a little bird as it flies

I thought, *He will head to the melody of the song*

*Of his own cherubic realm*

But I was wrong

For I felt his gentle hands

Touch my leg in resort

Every fiber of mine

Surrendered to his flawless touch

And got wrapped with fervent promises

That in infernal doom, they would be just as much

The Army[[38]](#footnote-38)

Searing knives in my head

Silencing the lovebird in me

An army of thoughts

Marching to seal my doom..

The Chorus of a Rustle

The sea of leaves

Join

In the chorus of a rustle

A sound that cleanses my soul

Chasing my weary shadows away

Tossing a wave of poems my way

Every leaf, every poem

Has something to say

Leaving my soul at ease

The Eternal Queen[[39]](#footnote-39)

You came a humble soul

Looking frantically into the unknown

Yet all you did was console

Every soul that had by you flown

Your diamond heart sent heavenly light

Upon every passing eye and heart

A walking mother in the hall’s night

A heart so loyal from the start

Soft, violet light always surrounded your gorgeous face

Like heavenly heather that even the horizon can’t trace

Your dazzling eye the window to your profound soul

No matter how cold the tread of hell, your hand’s touch would console

& wash the piercing thunder away

Letting the very soul feel you’ll always stay

You caught everything up in charming dance

& painted your magnificent dreams into reality

You made your students swim in a dreamy trance

Floating in your own Shakespearean world

No one shall pass who is a hint like you

The only one who can birth dreams and subdue

The Figure of My Soul[[40]](#footnote-40)

The figure of my soul:

All of them

Every single one

And everything they adorned themselves in

Their smiles

Warm eyes

Nice accessories

And cool shoes

And the laughs rarer than the farthest star

And everything they did

The trivial matters of their happy murmurs

Their precious, wild times

Where I could be the star

& everything we did

Us circling the pizzas

Our recklessness

Eating every last chip on the lounge

& every second we were huddled together

In our timeless classroom

Or under the motherly, intermittent sunrays

Oh.. how lonely I’ve been

Now that it has abandoned me… far away…

The Girl with Petals[[41]](#footnote-41)

All my surroundings shift into a meadow  
When you embrace me in your arms  
You free me from every lurking shadow  
& send out a spark of joy with your charms  
  
A florist’s masterpiece is all I can tell about your face  
& this feverish wave of glee, is all I can sense in your proximity  
Your heavenly laugh sheds its own utopian shield…

How can you wander, absent to your own gentle power to which the onlookers yield?

The Hymn of Time

It whispers somewhere within the willow

As it summons the Kingdom of Life:

Where nocturnal tales caress

Every perching raven

As the twigs beneath

Rustle to catch a syllable

Where faint hopes

Linger near a bird’s song

Where every searing vow

Echoes with the howls of thunder

&

Where perished souls

Peer through the sky’s pockets

Like one carefree child…

The Image of Happiness

There is no place for fear

For God will always be near

Your troubles will cower under His glory

By feeling His mercy, tears will roll down your cheeks

Then you’re alive on Life’s mountain peaks

There is no place for sadness

For the song of happiness will always be there

To slowly enchant us away from despair

Put a smile on your face

For when you smile, the kingdom of your spirit

Rings its glorious bell

Which is full of faraway memories that are ready to tell

Hearts hold human love

From soul to soul

That is as pure as pearls

In charmed shells…

The Keeper of My Soul[[42]](#footnote-42)

To the keeper of my soul

The one who engulfs my sky

To the one who fills my hole

And lits my hope before it would die

Your grand hand holds my small heart

Your white perishing every demon

Your wave of light washes my soul

Promising it would never part

Before my eyes would die

You would send down solemn promises

Filled with blissful light

Calming my broken plight

Only you know my intricate darkness

Only you look my fears in the eye

My imperious fiends you harness

Letting my soul fly up high

Your spirit sat with me by the corner

When no one did

Your skies would speak to me

The clouds gently blowing my soul

You would heal my fallen doves

Even if your glory would get smeared with their blood

Even if your heavenly matters would bend down to my earthly ones

My soul is yours

My body is yours

My life is yours

And when I grow old and fade

I’ll wait for you to let me fly to you

The Lady Who Veils Her Gems[[43]](#footnote-43)

When favors and losses were then unknown  
You drifted in like subtle silk   
A special twinkle is what you have first shown  
A start for your beautiful wonder that I would cherish within  
  
  
In the presence of your genius  
I could only sit, listen, and think in awe

When you stood there, brilliance would climb its way up our thoughts

Induced by your keen, dreaming eyes

A quiet, honest heart shines like sunbeams through your smiles

The touch of your hand is the caress of kindness

Your witty humor makes moments sparkle even after whiles

How can a person so calm veil all those gems?

The Legend[[44]](#footnote-44)

Red wine drips from her cords

Making imperial, sad beauty

She outtakes a thousand lords

The legend of making art out of life

She submerged me into her sad nostalgia

Kept me close under Jim’s Ultraviolence

Took me to see the West Coast and her Brooklyn life

& Made me see her demons and her heavens

All with her iconic genius

That beautifully haunts

And dreamily entrances

The Marshes[[45]](#footnote-45)

History ripples within their quaint skies

Where birds glide with balanced whims

Lordly reeds stand tall and rise

To the sun which flares with godly hymns

Pioneers arch upon their sable boats

Which lure the pristine waters

Divine silence then coats

A cluster of handwrought dwellings

Where merry fires slowly crackle

Within the Mesopotamian night

The Night Sky

Like large, pale, webbed hands

Over our heads

Were the night clouds

Of the dark sky

Dark demons peered over the edges

Others slept in the darkness beyond

The moonlight playing its last lullaby

The Phantom[[46]](#footnote-46)

It’s like Misfortune clasped with the blackest claws

The human filling of the heart and soul

So that the world seems like a cold, colorless stranger

Like a hollow fog swallowed existence

So the shelf’s more like pretending to be brown

& the TV issues sounds that scare me

Because that’s when I realize I’m behind a barrier of death

& I don’t know how to get through

In that terrifying blankness I just exist

With dead numbness I hurry my legs along the ghostly corridor

Weakly pleading for life

My face a mere mask of who I was

Dry and drained

White haze affecting the features

The least I could do was leave myself moist and stale

My body a mere shell in the battle

& When the night comes, this terrible, fiendish silence dawns upon me

In the midst of the snoring sleepers

Wide awake in terror of the smirking phantom I’m in the hands of

Beyond anyone’s reach

The heavy darkness its perfect shadow

Frantically calm, I delve into fantasies of where I would want to go

Trying to elude this phantom’s piercing presence

Only to marvel at my helplessness

I hear the birds’ sick chirping announcing the next day

The anthem of my abnormality

The Poetic Lord[[47]](#footnote-47)

Your silver hair flows on either side

Symmetrical and gentle like your lines

Your skin, faultless and wise

Your thoughtful eyes peering through their hazel into a dream

Your stance perfect

Silver eyebrows rising back, a poetic lord

Your nose, handsome

A voice struck by thunder whenever it speaks

Long fingers of some age

Old, strong love

and elusive genius

Where your poems are born

Into the open

Where they go flying...

Eternal and undying

The Princess of Mirth[[48]](#footnote-48)

A twinkle of childhood dances in her aura

Leaking mirth within and without

When riveted by her childlike vitality

Life is but a ludicrous parade

Where a swirl of laughter and craze

Does exist in everyone’s cushioned depths

And the parade of life

Is where everyone could have their luminous share

But she, the princess of mirth, is the one to dare

A statue of a person

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

The Two Brothers[[49]](#footnote-49)

Introduction to me is something rarely done

For I am the one who keeps the result

But my brother makes occasions suddenly gone

Perhaps by fixing an object or ending a tumult

But I am the one who keeps results unfinished

By lengthening friendships or keeping stuff broken

Unlike my brother who has results diminished

As I said, identity stays unspoken

But for people who see no clarity

I don’t want to see their hearts broken

They should see our start disparity

So I am the present perfect

And my brother is past simple

All we deserve now is respect

For we completed your language without any dimple

The Unheard Music of Miracles[[50]](#footnote-50)

A cluster of blessings drapes our being:

Delicate skin, the spring of life and youth

The blissful perfection of seeing

The world, harboring its untouched soul complex with truth

Where unspoken poetry reclines in its delicate folds

Where the tales of our enduring eyes carve what it holds,

The slow, lucky flow of unperturbed hours

The peace of the sky subduing its past’s crude darkness;

So we could sit on the veranda under the showers

Read the poems of nature scribbled unto the breeze from flowers

Or do whatever the wisps of our whims whisper

We live on, and on, with a beating heart

With a loved face to turn our eyes upon…

With seamless breaths filling our chests without an end or start

With an ethereal, melding wonder painting the sky every dawn

Still some fret over the fleeting, distant commotions

Heedless to the music of miracles that plays on with eternal motions

The Warm Sunset of My Days

No, I don’t want to sail the graceful, imposing river of maturity  
I don’t want to be a grand lady  
I don’t want to play the adult game  
All I need and want  
Is the warm sunset of my days  
Of mum coming down the hall, me embracing her  
Of sleeping in one humble bed  
Of mismatched pajamas, football arguments  
The little chaos of football broadcasts  
Of my own triumphs and losses, no, not my deep heart at stake  
Of idle afternoons  
Picking a PlayStation disk out of the shelf  
As my flailing mood desired...  
That unmistakable sound as the console consumed it  
That spotless joy of the game popping  
Or listening to Lana Del Rey, swimming in her glamour,  
In her Brooklyn life  
Or even Jim’s Ultraviolence  
Or just, warm packaged meals  
Sweeping to my threshold  
Wisps of happiness surging above from them  
Of diving into my childhood’s fantasy once more  
The PlayStation 2  
Once so huge in its grandeur  
Realizing it was to my younger, childish eyes  
And GTA San Andreas  
With that exact same sunset  
Washing Grove Street  
As I saw it when I was five  
With the same exact cars  
Same shades, same models  
Same songs, like All my Exes Live in Texas  
That same mean police officer  
The same “audacious” beach bikini ladies  
All I need and want is this warm sunset of my days  
Not the distant, adult maze

Through the Dripping Veranda

Stepping through the dripping veranda

Where all the nature beyond fluttered with grace

Where every leaf clung to its fleeting dream

Where the wind swept windy hands across my face

The sky’s eye teared with musing knowing

Laden with slanting slits of dauntless rain

Of life’s boundless breadth that’s flowing

Where not every soul can remain

The keen raindrops and swift winds

Grasped my naive frame into their embrace

Where the voice of nature desperately sings

Despite the abstract doom on our land’s face

The whirlwinds and heavy rain

Drifted unto every feeble chest-

Just as they now drift unto mine again

To stir powerful, invisible company

& to thrust fearless faith

Upon every battered soul

Forsaken hearts always found their way through swaying heather

Just as mine can now decipher its single, pristine trail, untethered

Ward 2 Room[[51]](#footnote-51)

Living in a cold pool of loneliness

No more than a chilled skeleton holding me up

My warmth, my love, and my hope as distant as the sun

The now, a sheer emptiness

The bed, a cold pit of despair

Where Death’s chill hands would caress my heart

With its little beats

& its walls

& devour them hollow

Leaving its dark fiends wash over me

The sky, a somber blue

The rustling tree the only proof I’m alive

Ward 2[[52]](#footnote-52)

Death swoops on among us

Tossing its sweep of rotting fungus

In the air

Drowning us in despair

What Came of One Man[[53]](#footnote-53)

His dignity resides by the bowing palms

His sharp, pinpoint vision borders the Emirates’ horizons

His pure Arab core twinkles by the deserts’ alluring dunes

His opalescent presence does have its shade upon a humble moon

The whole land yielded to his sacred hymn;

The wandering air wafted into its windy wake

The barren lands grew into plants and trees

That rustled with blessed freedom

The secretive whisper of History

Was no longer muffled within a desert’s folds

For he traversed its vastness

The scorching embers of ambition

Could be sensed through his features

Through his sable brows

Through his fathomless, penetrating eyes

That slightly disclosed the splendor of a surreal future

That his magisterial will would breathe to life

Under a heart of a lion

Kindness lit within

Just like a radiant lighthouse

Amid the fearless waves of the seas

The striking silhouette of his precious stand

Near the waving flag in the fine wind

Upon which his worldly devotions kindled

Will forever cast its unfaltering shadow

Upon the lights of his timeless days

And upon the lustres of his otherworldly heaven

Wissal[[54]](#footnote-54)

The angel of the highest heaven

Loves me like the only daughter she would have

For a thousand years

She has the grandeur of a queen

From a different time

Yet she is my best friend

Submerges me in otherworldly laughter

Making me forget I’m on earth

Her veins carry the seamless magic

Of moulding poetry

Her eyes carry the brightest lights

That shine from her soul

Her sensibility as sharp as a sword

Her brave, surviving heart beats for the ones she loves

And never once for herself

Words of Lavender

When the tragedy of a tale casts its shade upon my horizon

& Caresses away the body I trusted would never leave me

I’ll make sure the naïve depths of my soul

In all their spotless joy

Little old twinkles

Sad ridges

& Scintillating glory

Recline into words that accommodate them

Words of lavender leaning in grace

In the eternal fields of paper

Rustling timelessly with the breeze that once swept within my soul

Vulnerable and wild

You[[55]](#footnote-55)

You are the melody to my senses

My soul feels the warmth of your perfect frame

As my love for you condenses

Like a quick London rainfall

Your smile caresses my sight

As it fleetingly reflects

Your warm embraces that

Transform my world,

Your soft touch that gently blows the world away

As heaven beautifully dominates

In a blur of heavenly eternity

Your Distant Light[[56]](#footnote-56)

Your voice echoes in the moonlight

The leaves reflect your hazel eyes

I remember your eyes proud and bright

I’m in a swirling world that lies and lies

Every time I close my eyes

And before I open the door of dreams

My heart pounds with undying hope

That your essence would float here

There is silent haze that floats

As it throttles my soul

For it can no longer cope

The call for your distant light

Your Face[[57]](#footnote-57)

Your face is speared into the middle of me

With a spear that would have killed Spartacus

Your eyes, the most beautiful of all

I just want to swim in their wonderful ink

& Slowly perish there

Stay there, forever, dead or alive

Your Godly Light[[58]](#footnote-58)

You sit down

Hand on the other hand

Your silhouette a dignified grace

With your humble back

& the ruffle of your crimson hair

Your gracefully tranquil temperament

Painted with wise dignity

Your eternal stories

Calmly leaning upon you

The heart that endured the valleys of hell

& the fathomless pit of anguish

Yet you subdue your past’s demons

With your godly light

That shines from your face

& the very lines of your eyes’ smile

The light that has washed your soul

Forever…

Your Smile[[59]](#footnote-59)

The excitement that narrows your little eyes

The grin that shows your tiny teeth

Make the stars of my skies rise

Your smile shows its jewels beneath

It lifts me off my feet

Into a world of wonder

Making my heart complete

Conquering its dark thunder

It gives me a dose of eternal glee

A feeling beyond what hearts feel and eyes see

Our Orange Friday[[60]](#footnote-60)

Heaven welcomes me to the day

Into an orange sea

“It must be Friday” I say

A heavenly surge fills me

For I found the divine maiden, Mother

Sitting, a demure angel

Wearing a smile like no other

Looking so perfect that it’s painful

A smile that tells me everything will be okay

Looking at me right in the eye

Her eyes’ dunes enchanting me in every way

A look that I would need right before I die

Her “Good morning Lulu”, a melody ringing in the Utopian air

Annihilating the very definition of despair

Seeing her happy, reclining upon her wings, drinking coffee

The very thing my soul needed to see

Her hair a whiff of paradise

Her hug an endless tale of sacrifice

Everyone would be asleep

Leaving us in our own world’s deep

Where no dark notion can ever creep

My heart only in her warmth’s keep

Away from the hands of the earth below us, austere

& from Fate’s aching sear

Her floral nightgown a blanket of eternal peace

Which even the most formidable demon cannot seize

That would be our Orange Friday

Its healing beauty beyond what words can say

1. A poem inspired by “The Tragedy of Julius Caesar” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The throng refers to my family who come from Iraq [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A poem about a star I saw. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This poem is about the children in Syria and other countries who die from the ruthless chemical attacks. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A poem written from Mrs. Mallard’s point of view, inspired by the short story “The Story of an Hour”.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A poem about my wonderful teacher Ms. Fatma [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This poem is about my dear mother [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A poem about how much I miss my dear teacher Ms. Engy [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The mentions of the castle and the heather are from actual books, which are Harry Potter and Wuthering Heights. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. A poem describing my friend Amira

    [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. A poem about one of my favorite teachers, Ms. Aya. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. A poem about my sudden and unexpected goodbye to my school, my teachers, and my friends. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A poem describing my experience with anxiety [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This is a poem about tolerance and togetherness [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Drawn from my personal experience with bipolar disorder. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. A poem about me tightly embracing my school senior jacket after the sudden goodbye of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. A poem I wrote when I was in a psychiatric ward for my bipolar. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Dios is the Spanish nickname of Maradona given by his fans, meaning God. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. A poem written from the point of view of a mistreated girl in a patriarchal setting. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A poem referring to my aunt and talking about leaving my family behind in Baghdad [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Me describing how much I missed my home when I was in the hospital.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A poem describing my sadness when I was away from my family in a psychiatric ward for my bipolar. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. A poem describing the weakness of the human self [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. A poem dedicated to my precious teacher Ms. Loujain. I reflect on a time I saw her outside and almost walked to her but changed my direction in the end. I express how much I wish I could go back and not turn away. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. A poem about my precious mother whose name is Khayal [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. La Pulga, meaning The Flea in Spanish, describing the greatest football legend, Lionel Messi. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. A poem about my dear little sister, Layal. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. This poem is inspired by the sculpture of Sleeping Ariadne, She falls in love with Theseus, and gives him the ball of thread that later allows him to escape the labyrinth after killing the Minotaur. She elopes with him to Athens. But he abandons her, asleep, on the island of Naxos.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. A poem dedicated to my best friend Mariam. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. A poem describing the pain of leaving my school behind. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. A poem describing my raw experience being in a psychiatric ward for the very first time. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. A poem addressing my precious mother, whom I love more than anything and anyone in the world. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. A poem about the power and grace of women. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A poem addressing my dear mother. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. My first ever poem, written when I was in seventh grade. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. This is a poem that I wrote to illustrate the complex yet irrational emotion that come after losing a loved one suddenly.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. This poem is about my baby brother, whom I refer to as “The Angel”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. A poem describing my anxiety. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. A poem describing my mother and her time in Liwa school, as a grade 12 teacher and later as a vice principal. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. A poem describing how much I miss my school friends [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. A poem addressing my precious friend Fatima. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. A poem about my Lord, Allah. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. A poem I wrote about my very precious physics teacher Ms. Loujain. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. A poem about Lana Del Rey, my favorite and very loved poet and artist. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. This poem is about the beautiful Iraqi marshes. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. A poem describing my experience with severe depression. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. A poem about the appearance of my grandfather, who is a prominent poet.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. This poem is about The Princess of Mirth, my endearing mother. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. A poem I wrote about the present perfect and past simple tenses in English grammar when I was in eighth grade. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Under the theme of gratitude, this poem describes and acknowledges the unnoticed treasures of life and existence that we need to hold dear and appreciate.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. A poem describing my mental state and my surroundings in the ward. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. A poem describing the psychiatric ward’s atmosphere when I was first entered to it. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. This is a poem about the unforgettable ruler and founder of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. A poem about the love of my life, my Aunt Wissal. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. A poem addressing my mother. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. A poem addressing my dear grandfather, who was away at the time I wrote it. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. A poem addressed to my mother. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. A poem addressing my dear grandmother. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. A poem about my little brother Sary’s smile. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. A poem about my perfect Friday mornings spent with my mother [↑](#footnote-ref-60)