

nothing.

volume one.

nothing. volume one.

a set of raw sentiments
pretending to be poems.

YOUR
CART
IS
EMPTY



nothing.

volume one.

lines.

nothing.

volume one.

adnan ali.

lines.

*for you,
i guess.*

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acknowledgements.

This book is happenstance, as is everything.

The lines in this book were initially posted on my blog over the course of five years. I still feel very sheepish to say, "Hey, I wrote a few poems." I am grateful to a number of people who have helped and encouraged me during this time.

I want to particularly thank Zainab Basheer, a dear friend, who early on encouraged my writings far beyond what my writings deserved. Thank you, Zainab.

I would also like to thank the 'Blogistan.' The collection of bloggers of South Asianish origins, though we were spread over the US, the Middle East, Canada, Europe, etc. Some I suppose were also in South Asia. It is by reading their writings that I thought, "Maybe I can try, too." So I did.

A shout out to JonArno Lawson, a Toronto based author. I picked up his Black Stars in a White Night Sky from a book sale for no particular reason and ended up enjoying it tremendously. We somehow started exchanging emails through some internet magic. It was JonArno who planted the idea of making a book by saying, "I hope you try to make a book?" To make, and not to write. The thought has stuck in my head ever since.

I am often incredulous when people compliment what I write. One of the first times I started to believe was

when my brother, Noaman Ali, made a compliment-like remark about my writing. So while I do not want to thank him, I do so reluctantly. One does not simply ignore a compliment from a critical sibling.

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I really do feel as if this is nothing, but I hope that there is something here. More importantly, I hope that you find something here.

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city.

toronto.

even in toronto –
among the falling flakes –
i long for toronto.

in between.

leafless trees sway slowly in the wind.
a single car, with the hazard on,
is parked on the shoulder of the highway.
the traffic is light but steady.
a patch of graffiti separates the road from the railroad.
a bird swims - no, it floats rather peacefully - in the water.
i want to ask it if what is good
for the goose is also good for the gander,
but it might be a duck.
a message on the path tells me to **think!**
a lone runner runs around the gravel track
around the baseball field, her hoodie pulled up.

there lies an entire world
between broadview and castle frank.

toronto, my love.

i love this city, it's been said.
it's a beautiful city, i've been told.
toronto has been very kind,
but it has also been very cold.

this summer.

we were told it wouldn't
be cold this time of the
year. how long does the
weather last with renewed
times and recasted weather
forecasts?

i have no time for what
forecasts say. the weather
is all around me. but it's
hard to see what it would be,
the speeds of days confound
my thought processes.

if i could just rinse and
condense then think and
extend my thoughts today,
would i see tomorrow
better? maybe, maybe not.
but not tomorrow's weather.

i really should have
read my forecast this
summer. it fit right into
a tweet. it said: your
summer this summer, even
with the heat, will
be quite bittersweet.

why i love you so.

smelling the hint of spring in a cool winter breeze and
how it makes me feel alive.

the purple shade of your leaves as they leave to die.

sailor moon smoking a cigarette on front street, joined
by a hundred other cosplay enthusiasts on a sunday
afternoon.

humans being dragons that chinese new year's eve.

a happy lesbian couple holding hands walking down the
street. well, i don't know if they were happy. maybe they'd
just had a huge fight and were holding hands as a way to
overcompensate and hide their anger. i don't know, i only
saw them passing from across the street. i didn't have a
chance to peek into their souls.

on a rainy ramadan day, a muslim man uses his jaanamaz
(prayer rug) to shade himself from the wetness as he runs
towards a bus, carrying in his hands the food he will use
to break his fast.

all of this over time, but within a mile.

the feeling of living poetry.

toronto, this is why.

argh.

rise.

these are the voices that rise.
that come in on a tide,
on top of a wave
to make you cave
under the pressing weight
of your absurdities.
can you hear
the voices that rise?

these are the voices that listen,
even against the ticking clock
they sit down to talk.
but when time runs out,
they stand up and shout!
when will you listen to
the voices that rise?

it comes as no shock nor surprise
your attempts to criminalize dissent,
your minds bent
upon keeping at bay
thoughts that resent
your illusions of progress.
this, reflected on the faces
of the cops that you rent
meant to silence
the voices that rise.

lord knows it's a shame
when you can't hold fort
you run for the courts,
manufacturing lies
that ruin lives.
to serve the few
you bend what's true.
so fuck you
as you try and subdue
the voices that rise.

dirt.

out on my daily
grind, in the dirt
a puzzling find: two
round buttons in the
grass. the choice to
make: to take or pass?

what do i do
with the buttons
in the dirt? do i
needle and sew and
mend my shirt? or do
i stick the buttons on
my eyes and put cotton
in my ears, to drown out
the maddening cries and
hold back my tears?

crockashit.

excuse me [insert name of
work, school, political,
religious or whatever authority
here], regarding that thing
you just said. while you said
it with passion, and may even
have meant it, what you said
is a crockashit.

barely afloat.

there are many mounting reasons
for why these insanities ensue.
there seems to be too much to bear,
thoughts that leave you blue.

streams of water flowing,
many faces red
at the sight of floating livestock
that now float dead.

the spinning blades above
in which "sympathisers" fly
could otherwise be used
to let hopes rise.

what we see is something else,
we see apathy instead.
and it leaves us wondering why
the world has turned its head

away from all the suffering,
away from those who bleed.
and point fingers of blame instead
in these times of dire need.

"they should help themselves.
they don't deserve our love.
what has this to do with us?" you say,
while drones still fly above.

but there are no operatives here.
and the camps are of those
that need a helping hand
trying not to lose hope.

smalltalk.

tell me how you are.
but please, only a word or two.

then we can talk about the weather.
oh, it's so cold. oh, it's so sunny.
there. i've told you the weather
as if you didn't feel it on
your own skin.

okay, now let me talk about my
two year old for the next thirty
minutes and show you pictures.

and here we'll talk about something
the both of us are equally
indifferent towards.

i've always wanted to kill you,
and boring you to death is the
only legal way.

good deeds.

today i helped an old lady
cross the street. and then
i stole her groceries and
gave them to the poor.
and then i stole babies from
the poor and gave them
to the rich. that's three
feel good stories in one.
and now everyone is happy,
except the old lady and
the poor. but whatever,
you can't please everyone.
i don't care, i just made
the world a better place.

i totally dig you.

whatever you want
to call that spade
is irrelevant.
you are still
digging your grave
with it.

tread softly.

i'm not arguing with you
"just for the sake of argument."

in fact, i find that
accusation rather insulting.
i'm arguing with you so that
i can crush your dreams.

dreams.

nothing much.

nothing happened
because we let our days
overtake our dreams.

and we found
ourselves sleeping as the
world passed us by.

these.

smiles, tears
and our wildest fears,
dreams are made of these.

sweat and blood
all soaked in mud,
dreams are made of these.

butterflies
and a few sweet lies,
dreams are made of these.

wandering streets
and silly heart beats,
dreams are made of these.

mad men.

i used to think
that only mad men sing
songs that speak of dreams.

then i came to my senses
or my senses came to me
and then i fell asleep.

in response to cummings.

i, too, saw dreams.
but then i did,
and my doings did more
than my dreams ever did.

bored.

when i dream,
i shoot for the moon.
in my last dream
i shot the moon down.
it is here with us now.
and it is terribly bored.

gently.

row, row, row your boat
tumultuously upstream.
holy, holy, holy shit!
the dream ain't what it seems.

thought and play.

focus!

focus is like a
body of water fighting
evaporation.

awkward.

that awkward moment when.
that awkward moment when?

that awkward moment now.
that awkward moment then.

that awkward moment how?
that awkward moment where?

that awkward moment here.
that awkward moment there.

that awkward moment when?
that awkward moment when.

that moment.
so awkward.

we apologize for the inconvenience.

this brain is out of service.
please do not board this brain.
this brain is out of service.
please wait for the next brain.

loose ends.

so i look towards the sky
for a little thread of hope.
and i see the silent reply
in the form of a rope.

take a haiku.

many syllables;
here i need to make seven.
this better be five.

like a box of chocolates.

they always had issues
trying to communicate.
she was always punctual,
but he was always late.

she wanted to talk bikes,
but he always thought of rockets.
she told him to get a life,
he got her a box of chocolates.

on the way home.

might i make you laugh a little?
might i make you cry?
might just spread your wings a little,
catch a glimpse of you in the sky.

...

a penny for your thoughts?
though a penny's not a lot.
not in all the world is copper mint
to match the ways in which you think.

...

tell me where you are,
tell me where you've been
to take my mind off
the mess that i am in.

...

they have yet to make a pill
that betters all that ails us,
and for all the things we think to do
it's our lack of thought that fails us.

...

this is not the poem,
not the one you sought.
just scattered words,
a conversation with thought.

just plain folk.

many people here,
making sounds of ruffling leaves
falling from the sky.

engage in other pleasantries instead.

you should never say:
“you couldn’t have found a better man”
to women who are in the habit
of verifying such claims.

like... way better.

i *could* have
said it better
myself.
(but i never did.)

kindness.

old lady insists
for me to remain seated.
my stop passes by.

zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance.

i drive fairly safe,
though i still constantly fear
that my brakes will fail.

**that, and the postage costs were
unbearable.**

i wrote a series of letters
that i never sent to you.
i recently burned them
and it felt good.
well, i rolled 'em into joints
and smoked them.
which is probably why
it felt so good.

all our words.

if all your words were in a <div>,
i would style them with phasis.
i would take even the weak points
and mark them .
i would put them all front and centre
with {margin: 0px auto;}
and i would put around them
a blue dashed border with a width of one.
though if all my words were in a <div>,
i would style them with {display: none;}.

patterns of irregularity.

reach
 hold drop
 spill.

try
 harder
and harder
 until

you
 notice
your patterns
of irregularities
 repeat.

and his heart beats were out of tune, too.

the diagnosis is in,
it was death by routine.

word.

what was the word
for word
before there was a word
for the word
word?

weather.

my eyes survey others to see
whether i'm dressed appropriately.

for i never check the weather report,
i always dress for the day before.

shortbread cookie instructions.

the stuff

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 cup of butter (unsalted)
orange extract
chocolate chips
chocolate chip cookies

the work

put butter into machine. mix.
put sugar into machine. mix more.

sugar and butter will stick to machine's
mixing rotating thing and to the sides of the bowl thing.
get it off there. mix some more.

put in flour bit by bit while the mixer is mixing.
add orange extract during the bit by bit flour additions.

wait silently, or whistle while mixing and eventually
the mixture will turn into dough
like magic! but mostly science.

take the dough onto a board like thing
and knead it. with your hands!
for as long as you like, but not too long.

make dough into cookie like shapes
and put it on some sheet.
put sheet in to oven pre-heated at 350F.
that's fahrenheit, not celsius,
let's not get too excited here.

wait for 20-25 minute until
cookie shapes turn a little brown.
take cookies out and let them
chill and hang for a while.

melt chocolate chip bits in microwave.
use spoon to stir the melted chips.
use spoon (preferably) to apply
melted chocolate to cookies.
i applied them to half the top of the cookies.

wait for chocolate melt to unmelt.
wait over-night before eating.

end of wait.
eat.

if your shortbread cookies are not up to par,
eat the chocolate chip cookies instead.

circular.

i like circles.
circular motions,
revolving doors,
planetary rotations.
i like circles.
ferris wheels,
and carousels,
such dizzying notions!
i like circles.
the sun,
the moon,
and what's in between
the stars i have not yet seen.
i like circles.
self-referential
circular references;
things that end
in the same way
they begin.
i like circles.

fate.

if you read this,
you have read it.
that will never change.

love and longing.

**the most honest love poem (and also an
anthem for the non-committal).**

one thing
i promise you
is that
i love you
right now.

memories.

my old memories
are long gone.
i cannot hold on
to my memories
for more than a day.

every book i read
is like deja vu.
a faint thread;
a slight sense of connection.
but that too falls.
my memory fails me
but brings me
a new day everyday.

in ways this is good.
i can cry today,
and not remember tomorrow.
in ways this is bad.
i can love today,
and not remember tomorrow.
that thought hurts me today,
but will not hurt me tomorrow.

i am reborn every day.
a reminder of death from yesterday.

moon.

why do you love me so, said the moon.
were the earth at this distance,
i would love it, too,
i answered.

gone.

there will be a moment
when i will have lost
every fibre of my being.

all my memories gone.
all the names,
all the faces,
all the journeys,
all the places,
my every moment gone.

and in that moment,
i will miss you.

remember.

the fragrance of jasmine seeped
into my senses, jasmine molecules
through the vapour of this tea.
and it reminded me of the time
we found the tea. i remember it like
it was yesterday. the cool summer breeze
as we walked into kensington. or perhaps
it was scarborough town and a cool
winter breeze. the tea's available everywhere
now, even walmart carries it.

but this cup, this vapour, this smell.
every cup of this tea will remind me
of you -- every sip of it. well, not
every sip. that seems a bit much. but
certainly many sips. and probably not
every cup of tea. let's be real here.
time will pass and my senses will be
distracted. who knows what they
will remember. who knows what they
will forget.

who knows where a memory may lead.

list.

i said, "what else is there in
this world but your eyes?"
and she made me a list.

hold on.

what the hell
is free verse?

this is why
poetry is such
a sham.

how in hell
can charles-fucking-
bu-
kows-
ki
take a couple
of (run-on)
sentences,

put
one, two
or three words
per line and
call it
poetry?

even kasparov has to
go the full distance
of the board
every time before he can turn
a pawn into
a queen.

beauty, i suppose,
is in the eye of the beholder.

it's just that
some of us
have to go through
many more eyes
before someone

holds on.

longing.

went to the bookstore
to find the book of longing.
but it wasn't there.

recapture?

set, zoom, focus.
click, flash, snap.
captured, stored, done.

what then is missing?

the shutter speed,
the aperture f-stop,
all set for proper exposure.
the flash and the light,
they all seem so perfect,
they all seem so right.

then what is it that i am missing?
what is it that i want?
how, oh how, do i capture
a moment that is gone?

reflection.

i avoid mirrors
in which i am present;
instead looking towards
the heavens and the oceans
hoping to catch a glimpse
of your reflection.

the love poem (that we have all been waiting for).

tell me, my dear,
what has my love for you
done for you (lately)?

do you now shit and flush
rose buds down the commode?
the buds settling in the sewers
sending up rose scents
to passersby above?

tell me, my love,
about your eyes.
do you see any differently?
is your vision now 20/20?
has it turned spherical
your astigmatic eye?

tell me about your
fear of heights,
your dizzy days,
your lazy nights.

tell me what you've
crossed off on your
list of dreams.

you.

your smile.

i would fall
a thousand times over,
just to see you smile again.
i would marry just your smile,
then i'd brush up on my poetry
so that everyday
i could recite
the thousand words
that your smile is worth.

without you.

i need you.
but i create
this distance.

because you
could use time
without me.

your eyes.

eyes?
what of them?
what about them?
they are just objects
for a lover's rhymes,
but not mine.

no,
i did not see or look into your eyes before
i was taken with the aura of your presence,
the rhythm of your actions,
and your raging imperfections.

your eyes?
i have already forgotten your eyes.

up here.

your name came up
and it made me happy,
though i am not sure
how exactly
it got all the way
up here.

your nose.

i saw someone with a nose --
a nose that can only be described
as the nose that you carry.
perhaps you had lent it out
or maybe it is the latest fashion,
but it reminded me of you --
as it should have.
it was practically your nose.

miss.

here you are.
and yet -- here i am,
missing you.

your eyes.

if i could take away
that glimmer from your
eyes for a moment
and show you your
life again, which moments
would you revise? which
steps would turn their
tide? would you leave
yourself some element of
surprise? some unspoken sign?
some cryptic advice? given
a chance, are we not
all revisionists? odd defective
perfectionists, trying to better
all that matters to
us at the time?
what *would* you do
if i took away that
glimmer from your eyes?

thinking.

i was thinking
about you a lot,
but it wasn't you
i was thinking
a lot about.

your smile.

i might have been staring.
i didn't notice that i was.
that's if i was.
and even if i was,
i wasn't really staring.

i was waiting for your smile.

without you.

i will sleep tonight
in hopes of a dream --
maybe a dream of silence;
perhaps a conversation.
if i am lucky,
a slow dance.

i wonder how
it would be
without you.

without you,
i wonder how
i will sleep tonight.

my thousand words.

so maybe i wouldn't fall, not a thousand times.
maybe i would just trip, slip or slide just a little.
maybe i would sing out of tune your favourite song
or maybe mine, or mix the words around a little.

maybe i would bake a cake
and ice it with chocolate,
with a side of strawberries or mangoes
or whatever you were in the mood for.
it could be vanilla icing or something else.
maybe we'd just scrap the cake
and bake cookies instead,
rolls of dough and chocolate chips.

maybe i would make you smile
by either shock or surprise,
a tap on your shoulder,
or a loud boo from the side.
or maybe i would make a face
to see a smile on yours.

perhaps a smile after hours of silence,
or through the first words that break it.
maybe a smile that only comes after
a rather thought-provoking argument.

and not just your smile,
i would settle for a chuckle
or even a smirk,
perhaps just a nod,
or even just a blink.
i'm not picky like that.

it's not just about the smile that shows on your face,
or the teeth that you show, or the ones that you don't,
it's not about the shape that your cheeks take
or the way your eyes move when you smile.
it is, and yet it isn't.
it's about the process -- the telepathic message
which transfers the smile in my mind to take shape
through you.

it's not about how wide it is, or how long it lasts.
though the wider, the better,
the longer, the better.
it's about the state of your mind
that you choose to express
through your smile.
it's about the process of thought and change that occurs.
all the details in the background to which i am not privy.
it's about the thousand things i want to know,
but never asked about.

but let's not get all silly here,
i know that smiles aren't a constant state,
that moods swing up and down, they fluctuate.
the amplitudes and frequencies change
like a sine or a cosine wave,
which if you look real close, or from afar,
happen to look like bridges between
frowns and, yes, smiles.

so i don't mean at all
to romanticize the smiles and falls
in such a way that ignores
the pitfalls of our day to day.

it's not so much your smile
as much as it is that you smile.
if it were just your smile
then a frozen or moving image would do,
but it doesn't.
it doesn't capture the life in the act
because there is life in your smiles.
so to be around you *smiling*
is simply a way of *living*.

on many days i wonder about
you because in my mind you are
in so many ways. so much so
that i may no longer have any understanding
of who you might be, of who you really are.
i want to break through that smile
and feel through that frown.
i want to sit with that blink and
dine with your yawn.
i want every moment with you
to be as real as it can be.
i want every moment
to be as real as it can be.

these are not the thousand words
that your smile is worth.
no, i have not found nor written those yet.
these are the thoughts behind my smiles,
the thousand flashes in my mind
which when asked about
i can only describe as: nothing.

words are lazy creatures,
with many odd features,

they slip through your
fingers like sand.
you use to them express
and perhaps confess thoughts and feelings,
and yet find yourself making
quite a mess of them.

words are plenty around
but never around when
you feel like you need them most.
some thoughts and feelings remain simply
wordless.

i've let these words sit here for years on end
with no end in sight for where they'd end.
so they lie here dormant and still,
unseen by the light, unmoved by the wind.
and i don't even have a thousand.
life
is
too
short
to
wait
for
every
single
word.

so here are just a few scattered words
(instead of the thousand)
that i won't recite everyday
because that is a promise, which honestly,
i wouldn't be able to keep.

navel-gazing.

wait.

i wait with my breath unabated.
because, you know, i want to live.

hit and run.

these words, they hit and run,
words that hit and don't sit
to see what happens next,
words that run and miss out on the fun
and fear of judgment.

words that have no meaning,
so you make your own.
words that carry no feelings,
so you make your own.
words that don't tell you who i am,
so you make your own
me.

no poet.

i really want to show 'em.
and try and get to know 'em.
perhaps i'll write a poem.

and while i may show it,
both you and i know it,
that i am no poet.

my greatest trick.

sometimes i wish i would just face that fear,
but don't we all have our bones to pick?
though sometimes i wish i could just disappear,
would that not be my greatest trick?

but i want to be here, there's much to see,
moments i have not yet met.
i think if i would just share more of me,
that would be my greatest effect.

magic is music.

magic is the music, that
even in silence
your eyes can see.

there are those who shout
the spoken word,
i'd rather whisper my poetry.

locked.

locked in my mind,
not a word i can say
to make it right
or to make it wrong again.

objects in space.

"who the hell are you?" she says.
and i wonder how odd a question that is.
"who the hell am i?" i repeat,
with a rippling inflection on the i.
i take a seat and turn the table,
"who the hell are we?" i ask.

well, who the hell are we?
look at us.

we rise from the ashes
and we fall from grace.
we split into classes
and divide by race.
we try and hide pain
and yet it's on our face.
we're all so individual
and still so interlaced.

who are we?
look at us.

we're just objects in motion.
just objects in space.

vain.

i want people to laugh. uncontrollably.
but i want to feel as if i am controlling it.

i don't want to be *told* how funny i am.
which i am.

i want people to shower me with praises
through smiles and smirks,
through giggles and guffaws,
through belly laughs their bellies can't stand.

i want people to laugh so honestly
that they feel embarrassed about their laughter.

oh, sweet validation.
that's the spot.
don't stop.

i don't think this is too much to ask for.

when i die,
i want a few to say, 'he was an asshole,'
and a few to say 'he was a friend.'
knowing that some will say both.

fix.

maybe if i sleep more
i can fix everything
about me
that is broken.

fear.

i do not want to be afraid to fail at things
that my heart is truly in.

lost and found.

emptiness.

it is not a moment of silence we share.
it is emptiness
as we both die inside a little,
creating a vacuum
that brings us closer.

into the wind.

though the weatherman said
there would be no cool breeze,
it came and it came indeed.
as if god kissed calmness
into the wind.

paces.

i pace and pace
from place to place.
charting steps;
mapping space.

me and my paces,
lost in these spaces.
not a moment to blink,
not in these places.

look up.

i did not see the
stars tonight. i blamed
the city. i blamed the
light. i blamed the
weather. i blamed the
fog. i blamed pollution
and i blamed the smog.

i thought, where did we all
go so wrong? i thought, maybe
i should write a sad song. i
thought, oh lord, why is the
world so stuck-up? but, in fact:
i did not see the stars,
because i did not look up.

love.

i just discovered that you are not the author
of the love poem you sent me.

reflection.

it's a beautiful, cruel world.
a work of art painted in the dark.
then a light shines.
it was a mirror all along.

lost.

lost,
and in search for direction and guidance,
i walked into the buddhist temple
asking where i could find
the nearest gas station.

stones and stars.

when the stepping stones
don't seem enough,
follow the path
that you make
with each step.

then take a moment, or two –
glare at the empty sky,
and realize that
the shooting star
is a lonesome star.

dream as you might,
as many as you like,
as many as the night may give.

one step at a time, my dear,
is all you should ever take.
one breath at a time, my dear,
is all you should ever take.

a beautiful truth.

i have come to realize
a beautiful truth
that we all let slide.

a truth that makes us lie.
a truth that politicians try and hide.
a truth that poets avoid.
an undoubtedly unpopular truth.

and that is that we are *all* ugly
on the inside.

mirror.

i am not sure now
that if i had mirrored
your every move,
whether i'd be stuck
in a well down below
or stuck
in the clouds up above.

our souls.

what happens to the soul
of an apple once it dies?
what happens to the soul
of a tree, the soul of an
ant, the soul of a bee?

what happens to a lego
house once taken apart?
where does the house
go? who can we ask?
who really knows? is it
the bricks that make a
house, or a house that
makes the bricks? is it
our body that makes us
move, or our souls that
make us tick?

how do we make sense
of what we're told? how
do we make sense of
our very souls?

wake.

and as much as we
like to declare what is
wrong and what is right
the eyes can only see
as much as there is light.
so carry with yourself
a torch in your mind,
and turn it on
from time to time.
it's not surprising to be
lost without light as we
approach the night.

while you may even wander into the mystical deep,
a walk is not a walk when we walk while we sleep.

so let's wander when awake,
leaving wonder in our wake.

light.

i have no delusions
of light at the end of the tunnel.
i don't expect to get there.
god may have said,
"let there be light."
i say, "there need be none."
i have no delusions.
i roam in any direction
that my feet will lead me.
i carry nothing with me.
nothing here is mine.
only the journey...

maybe the journey is mine.

life.

a thousand smiles, a thousand frowns
a thousand miles, a thousand towns

a thousand words, a thousand lines
a thousand hurts, a thousand times

a thousand tries, a thousand falls
a thousand cries, a thousand calls

a thousand beats, a thousand sounds
a thousand streets, a thousand rounds

a thousand pains, a thousand highs
a thousand stains, a thousand lies

a thousand burns, a thousand joys
a thousand turns, a thousand toys

...

a thousand ways, a thousand whiles
a thousand days, a thousand smiles

zindagi aarahaa hoon mein.
(life, here i come.)

oh, but i insist.

i look at my hands
back and forth,
and again,
to bear witness
to my own existence.

notes and things.

All the poems in this book were posted to my blog in some form and format.

The '**toronto.**' poem that kicks off the '**city.**' section is clearly a nod to Basho.

The '**barely afloat.**' poem was written in reference to the 2010 floods in Pakistan. Even now (2013), drones still fly above.

Check out the web version of '**all our words.**' for an interactive version of the poem. <http://nothing.jaaduhai.com/volume-one/all-our-words>

'**longing.**' is a true story in which I set out to find Leonard Cohen's Book of Longing.

zindagi aarahaa hoon mein in '**life.**' is from a Hindi song in the movie, *Mashaal* (1984), written by Javed Akhtar.

The reference to the 'lego house' in '**our souls.**' is from xkcd #659.

To those who say '**shortbread cookie instructions.**' is just a recipe and not a poem, to you I say, "well, what is a poem?"

'**fate.**' was originally published in *Four and Twenty*, an online short form poetry journal.

'**kindness.**', '**engage in other pleasantries instead.**', and '**lost.**' were originally published in *The Feathertale Review*.

The typefaces used in this book are *Bitter* and *Asap*. Fitting, in some sense.

I am entirely aware that certain pages of this book were left completely blank. Please do not write to me about this.