

# INTO SOLIDITY

-POEMS & PROSE-

Nefisa UK  
London

*Into Solidity*

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02. Open tears, empty air & kiwis of increasing meaning

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*Todo es ganancia  
si todo es pérdida  
Camino hacia mi mismo  
hacia la plazuela  
El espacio está adentro  
no es un edén subvertido  
es un latido de tiempo*

*All is gain  
if all is lost  
I walk toward myself  
toward the plaza  
Space is within  
it is not a subverted paradise  
it is a pulse-beat of time*

-Octavio Paz



## Foreword

The great modernist poet of the mid-20th century, Ezra Pound wrote, when speaking of the 12th and 13th century poetry of the Troubadours in Provence:

"Poetry is a composition of words set to music... The proportion or quality of the music may, and does, vary; but poetry withers and 'dries out' when it leaves music, or at least imagined music, too far behind it...Poets who are not interested in music are, or become, bad poets...Poets who will not study music are defective."

Yusuf Misdaq's poems are green with music, they move and shimmy with fantasy, they sing of loss and desire, they aspire not only to the condition of musicality we find in the great Troubadour songs – they were indeed songs set to music – but they are also haunted by the mystical hypnotic rhythms of another great 13th century poet who, like Misdaq, came from Afghanistan: Jalaluddin Rumi.

Both the Troubadours and Rumi longed to be joined with the Beloved, to attain a paradise through dreams and images; *Into Solidity* also speaks through just such surreal dreams and images. Falling into highways of water, filled with mysterious hypnotic pilgrims trawling along on their tip-toes, for example.

Not only is there a sense of composition here, of musical form and rhythm, but there is a voice, a real voice taking shape, maturing into its own bewildered and bewildering vision of "reality" which is both beautiful and filled with anguish (as in the prose-poem, *Fractus*; which is a cruel and finally intangible world about to melt, much like the icicle at the very start of the

book, melting into nothing, joining with everything. Themes of ice and water abound in *Into Solidity*; they freeze, melt, flirt with dying and flirt with rebirth.

There is a sense of the author being both intimate with the consciousness he swims in, in these poems, but also alienated from it, painfully distant from it. As he tells us in one *Sentence*:

“Perhaps one day, you'll know what it's like to feel  
Distant from the blood in your own body.”

Beneath the surface swaying between desire and incipient loss, this young poet writes of loss with a sense of vigor and hope; there lies a longing for a mystical reaching out to a greater sense of being which may lie in the melting away of the self. Throughout the darkness and seeming desperation of many of these poems there is always the possibility of a very sacred stillness, not portentous or pompous but coming from a place that acknowledges the possibility of God.

...The life of drums is eternal  
Music is always marching with you  
Even when you cannot hear.

Throughout this journey we can both hear and see as we make our way into Yusuf Misdaq's potentially visionary world.

Raficq Abdulla,  
May 11<sup>th</sup> 2009, London

## Preface: Lessons for Artists living in the worldly world

The thematic inception of this book (circa Spring 2006) drew on much more than just the feelings that gave birth to the poems (namely: an icy estrangement and detachment from this world leading to the dissolution of the morale- and its subsequent attempts at reformation). Indeed, the book mostly thrived on an inspiration I had for its eventual presentation. It was my personal insistence that once completed, the body of this book would have a 'hardback' cover made entirely of clear glass (partially to resemble melting ice, partially to emphasize its themes of fragility and, further, the fragility of concepts themselves). I also envisioned pages made of very thin, almost translucent paper, which would become more solid, thicker (and even blacker) towards the end of the book. The hardback glass cover was in itself a concession- at the very start I had envisioned a cover made of actual ice, which would then be kept cold forever. One must be practical, so I went with glass instead. Perhaps there would only be one copy of this glass-book ever made, or at best a handful of copies, but they would be special, and they would perfectly match the mood of the pieces I was going to spend the next few years writing and refining.

And then I wrote the poems.

They took place mostly in London, where I was completing my master's degree. A couple of the poems were written in America, as were three of the prose pieces (two are relatively obvious because of their titles, the other is 'Dream.')

Let us be clear: the fact that you are probably now reading the book on comparatively unattractive bleached-white paper, perfect-bound in the significantly cheaper-to-produce paperback format, is a travesty that history shall never be able to rectify. It is a result of the fact that most of the time, this is not a world that respects artistry. Neither is it a world that offers much encouragement to the recipients of such inner-visions. Unless they happen to possess, or earn, numerous other valiant qualities, their visions are destined to sink. The reason I did not get the opportunity to craft this book the way I wanted to was the same reason that Michael Jackson was slowly martyred, and perhaps the very same force that drove Paul Gauguin into the South Seas: not enough people give enough of a damn about art and its power. And that's fine. In fact, it's good.

Eventually, such a *self*-filled artist grows tired and weary of fighting a losing battle. There is only so long he can hold his own against what he sees as a sea of gerbils and sheep. Indeed, there is only so long *anyone* can 'hold their own' when a word / concept like 'against' features so prominently in their vocabulary & philosophy. This weary artist must evolve. Fortunately, their demoralization need not be a permanent condition, but rather, a matter of seasons, or *pulse-beats of time*. One eventually becomes incapable of holding grudges if s/he truly believes in destiny. Yes, destiny. Bitterness dissolves into gratitude. *With time, each slap becomes a gift, wrapped.*

This book, it must be said, was written without the benefit of such calming knowledge; indeed it was written at such a

young time when the newness of pain could fool one into believing that all the ‘bad’ things that happen are, indeed, ‘bad’, and certainly not gifts. It was fresh, virgin pain, eternal pain, bled out onto blank pages that did not judge, blank pages that even understood. The pages appreciated the blood loss that the ink endured. Both ink and blank page know of emptiness.

I am hoping that this book reaches the hands of people who are going through those depths, those who will even consider the possibility of suicide. What you hold in your hands is life.

I should (like to) think that a lot of artists find it incredibly distasteful and obtuse to talk about art and the role of the artist in a categorical or essentialist way. And yet, given that we are all artists, if one cares, there should inevitably come times when strong words must be had, when lines –however flimsy history may render them– must be drawn here and now. We must speak out, lest we be no better than Tony Blair or Milli Vanilli. Therefore, (and therefore) let it be said strongly: our aim as artists is to empathize with and then inspire the mass populace, in all of its variations and manifestations, to our maximum capability. To *be* the people, and then to *give* to the people. That must be our aim. Just as much as it may be our prerogative to gratify our own internal visions and occasional artistic indulgences or to do any other of the pentillion things an artist can do. If we are not finally *serving*, or if we are serving our own desires alone, then we are merely serving ourselves our own destruction on a plate (it is an expensive, complicated and unhealthy meat paté, when all we need is bread and milk).

Our aim should be to harmonize all of the many wonderful and varied things we are capable of, until we are as indestructible 'beasts of art,' roaming this world with real power and a beautiful influence. An influence that is almost benign and blind in its unassuming humility, but great and powerful because of this, and because of its cause. Service, at our own expense, and ultimately, for our happiness. Everything is sacrifice and renunciation. As Paz says, *all is gain, if all is lost.*

And so, in the highly unlikely event that some sensitive and well-intentioned patron of the arts were to one day insist on turning my initial, wonderful vision for the design of this book into a reality, with the ice / glass cover and all of the translucent pages crafted exactly to my specifications, I would still, nonetheless, continue to cling onto and remember the fact that it did not happen when I most wished and willed it to happen. For in this lies deep wisdom for those who reflect.

Yusuf Misdaq  
May 13<sup>th</sup> 2009, Washington DC

INTO  
SOLIDITY



There is a mansion of ice which exists.  
There is one remaining icicle within  
Being held from its one corner alone  
Dripped from the ceiling

It rocks backwards and forwards in silence

There is just enough cold around to keep the last corner from  
Melting

There is just enough of the idea of warmth to keep the icicle  
Dangling

Trying

It will either remain rocking in this hopeful stasis  
For the rest of time  
Or, one day, it will drop down  
It's belief in change too strong to keep it chained

Perhaps it will fall down and hit a hard surface  
Smashing into pieces  
Perhaps it will fall into water, slowly melting *bye* into  
Nothing  
Shedding it's essence away  
Joining with everything

Whatever

Once it has moved, once it begins to fall, and live  
Then death is certain

Within that fall, however, is a life  
Filled with

Springs  
and scents  
and solar events

Every fall becomes worth it

## Somnambulance

Do you notice the people who are everywhere?  
We are filled with people.

They brush past our shoulders so often, one person might sneeze dust off your shirt, another will add hair and fluff to your jacket.

We are packed in together not knowing that we can be made to befriend and work in unison.

If the train stopped and the lights went out, leaders would emerge, and a dynamic of cooperation and teamwork would arise. It takes a disaster to bring human interaction here. We rarely talk of our own accord.

We are wasting years here. Years.

And smoke. Clearing and twisting and overlapping in front of an overcast, grey sky so that you can't tell the difference. You can't be sure of a thing but this: other things around you move, and you are static. And stale.

*Thripples*, soberly sliding  
Connected to *Jankus*  
And MEGA-Jankus  
Which move imperceptibly

Clouds

## Fractus

“Well. I don't know,” she said, exhaling deeply, wearing a sad face and a droopy sweater of wool in dull earth-tones. Too big for her. Mid-50's. Country woman. Country house. Dark in the daytime. Grey, stringy hair and lines of worry below the eyes, also greying.

“It's not like you have to make a decision right now mum.”  
He meant well, but he was twenty-two.

“I *do* need to make a decision right now James. I *do!* I've been *faffing* around like this for the last six years and what have I got to show for it?” She said ‘faffing’ with a scrunched up face and many vigorous shakes of the head, which made her look like she had mental problems. “NOTHING!” She slapped her fragile hand down on the wooden table. Old wooden table, worn in and lived in; didn't recognize her either. “I've got no more bloody time to waste. This is it! I've got to do something to stop the rot. My brain's been rotting, James, ROTTING! D'you know what that feels like?”

Didn't need to be answered. Answer was her face and this aura of desperation that surrounded her. This unfamiliar panic. James looked down and felt fear climbing into him, crawling into his body like weeds, from the floor. His cool basketball shoes were of no use now.

She was decomposing. Or tightening up. The mother who had raised him was no longer there, no longer total. She was becoming pieces. Fragmenting. Some of them were flying off

like bullet ricochets, spinning violently. Some of them were motion less, sinking away silently like a cat's shadow down in the night. She was falling through a hole in time with wobbling black and white TV swirls from the 1960's all around her.

She was crystallizing like old honey.



### Sentence

“Perhaps one day, you’ll know what it’s like to feel  
Distant from the blood in your own body.”

## Bell

Imagine a fat bell, the size of a Sumo-wrestler  
Wobbling with the woozy wind  
Unable to stop itself trembling

Sullen-faced and steel, tragically set in its ridiculous figure.  
What can it possibly do to assert itself over the world if any  
loose-lipped fool can come along and slap it into sound?  
Heavy-handed, obtuse people plod like idiot-giants all over  
this tenderish Earth. They never slow down enough to  
recognize a face that has been, or will soon be, crying. And  
when they see the bell, they grab it excitedly, with their  
stupid man-hands and heave it as hard as they can.

After it's been slapped  
And they've walked away, messily  
It lies limp  
Shaking and naked  
Shivering in the cold (not the wind)

Barely moving now

### Outside his Window / the Mistral blows

The old man is alone. He whispers it gently, lying scattered on his side, in his day-clothes, amidst the twilight blue of a Mediterranean room that belongs to no one.

His grey-stubbled mouth moves  
His experienced, delicate lips

The whisper seems to travel across the entire Universe  
It echoes existence

“ *W h e r e ?* ”

He breathes like an old man, audibly, weak.  
His whisper is tired  
Finishing

Drawn long and full of meaning, or yearning.

The small wind produced by the mouth and soul is ushered naturally away from that lonely room and out into the Universe

A boy stood in front of me with tonnes of smoke plumping-pumping from his ears.

He opened his mouth to speak, as if to explain himself and ease my concerned expression, but as soon as he did so, he fell forwards, coughing violently. The smoke was out of control. With his head facing the floor and his soft, nervous hands desperately clinging to both sides of my elbows, he began vomiting baby snakes, which landed on my shoes. After 14 snakes he looked up at me with his desperate eyes, glistening wet with unfallen tears. Eyes which would have been so beautiful on another day. I saw golden fields in his dark eyeballs, buttered with sunshine. I don't think he was aware of those fields. Under his skin ugly music was beating, trying to push on through. His closed mouth exploded internally, as if a bomb had just exploded inside of it. He turned down to the floor again, spewing more wet, wriggling snakes all over my trousers. Every now and then, crackling, spotted eggs would also appear, some cracked, some unhatched. Punching their way out of some of the eggs were miniature men with sharp suits and no faces. They punched with a repressed energy. Then they took gadgets out of their pockets that told them which direction to walk.

I held and supported this beautiful, ill boy, noticing, as I looked down and studied his hands, scenes of life taking place on each of his fingernails. On the nail of his thumb, I saw a mother of motherly age kneel down in a dress, fixing her sons hair and rubbing his cheek, warming it, smothering

it gently. In the index finger nail I saw worshippers, regular Mosque-going folk and Church-going folk, in their private moments, contented in nature and amidst shaded quiet rooms. Suddenly, that same index finger, which had been curled tightly around my elbow, shot outwards, stiff and disciplined. At the very tip of that pointing finger, above the nail, a perfect miniature oak tree grew, right in front of my eyes. From his finger into mid-air. I couldn't help but smile at the perfect detail of the bark and how its roots mixed so organically with his soft pink skin. I didn't dare to touch the fertile, delicately tiny leaves which danced in harmony, blown upon by some small and gentle wind. Some distant, might-have-been wind. And across his arm grew strawberries, at first forming green and reddish bumps under his skin like goose-bumps, and then, gently, organically, sprouting out of him, increasing in size just like a baby, growing until they popped, and rolled off, and fell. Fell somewhere else. In the folds of his long dark hair, I saw villages and towns, farmers, Amish and numerous brown others, running teenagers with sky behind them. Faces of contentment, excitement even. They lived there in his hair, and they lived somewhere real also.

The boy was now trying to pull out a baby alligator from his mouth. He was gingerly tugging at it by its tail, which wriggled wildly out of his mouth. As much as the boy sheepishly pulled, he winced, and kept on giving up, and the baby alligator seemed happy. It was a battle of wills. The wild, hungry young consumer didn't want to go anywhere. And it wouldn't. It had snapped its little jaws and teeth down onto the young boys tonsils. The boy shivered and made

more strange noises. Finding a new strength somewhere, and with one brave yank, the boy firmly ripped the young alligator (by the tail) out of his throat, where it splatted down onto the floor with a thud, followed by large dollops of blood. The blood was coming from the boys throat, which no longer had tonsils. The alligator scattered away, happy with what it had accomplished.

I desperately wanted to help the boy, to save him from death. Not knowing what else I could possibly do, I grabbed the sides of his head with both of my hands and brought his face up, directly opposite to mine, so that I could look into his eyes. It seemed too late. His eyes were gray and spiders were rushing out of his nose. He made non-human sounds from somewhere deep inside of him. His nose still tried to breathe, out of rhythm, scuffed and interrupted by internal disagreements and the ongoing outpouring arachnids from all of his orifices. They left a trail of grayish writing wherever they crawled.

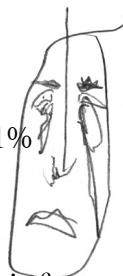
The writing looked like this:

FTSE 100 / 6,261.00 / 45.80

NASDAQ / 2,438.49 / -44.82 / 0.61%

Oil / 123.53 / 1.69 / 1.39%

Gold / 871.20 / -6.50 / 0.74%



And it was beginning to dominate his face.

Winter 2006, riding through it on the Amtrak

Nothing happens without the will of God. And I am just a servant on this scenic tour of malice, medicine, pearls, pigs and pregnancy. This world of Earth. Of stone and glass. Of sand and service.

Gliding down brown mountains which spill from their pores

I roll naked down the cascading earth  
Coarse fragments of brown soil and bean seed run over and  
onto me

None are dirty.

### Hearts of emotionless city-movers

I see through your Japanese and Scandinavian. You are no different from me, in your recesses. No different from an emotional Greek/Turk, or a crazy Czech. No difference as the camera pierces your pale flesh and zooms in towards your heart. I see there the same fleshy pounder, the same screaming giant, scared stiff and weeping so unashamedly. Knowing you're not accustomed to looking that deep within yourself, he weeps freely and loudly; knowing you can't hear, he thumps. Like baby wailing, with so much insistence, with a full and complete understanding of the injustice inherent in life. Thumps. Pounds.

To be acknowledged.

With every pound there is a salty tear being pumped through your blinded blood.

And all the while you walk through the pearly world silent and obedient to the number-games, nodding and taking notes on the minor details of the body-talkers who sing the narrow seminar songs.

All the while sleeping and waking the years away in utter sleep.

We know nothing

Where mirrors come  
Stillness leaves

Where leaves fall  
Stones firm up

Where love dies  
God pulls the strings

When cats cry  
Humans are sleeping

### Shelter from the Warm

I am a new immigrant on this dandelion orb: Earth

'Step lightly' is what my instinct tells me

I feel the danger in the gentle spring breeze

Feel the phasing out and finality of finite footsteps

Know that it's not going to last

When she changes and the love in her voice goes  
And she's distant.

Even though she said forever, what did she know?

Bobbie once sung about

"Old men with broken teeth, stranded without love."

And I, this silly little immigrant, shy-stepping across this sinking, falling-petal-Earth, say that having no love and being old is one and the same thing.

### A mother's house

Why has a mother decorated this house?  
Why are there flowers next to me?  
Why am I sitting on a Silken Afghan carpet?  
Why is there Golden paint on the table leg?  
And ornamental patterns carved into the chair legs?

What is the point?

She tires herself cleaning the kitchen. Every week.  
Grease is not pleasant  
But it's always building up  
Whatever.

## Tears

Something's reached into me today. This evening  
My calf-muscles are quivering from morn to midnight.  
I am nervous. And behind that, a sadness  
Almost so deep as to still the poet's hand  
And      paralyze

Tears keep reminding and threatening  
They've been threatening all day  
Threatening to intimidate the sun  
Threatening to come out to lunch and dinner

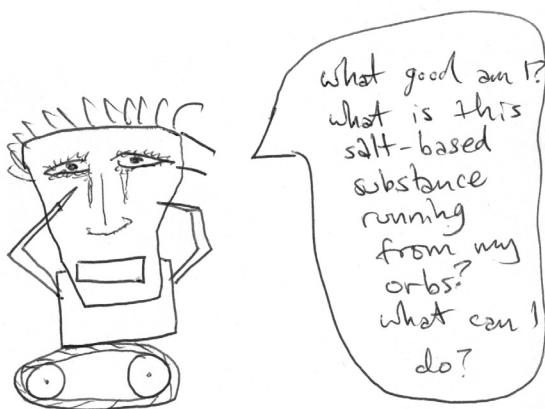
They are salt water from a fearful heart

Reductive of all reality. Except their own reality  
Not taking anything but themselves seriously  
Even a joke

I tried to release them at sunset  
They almost came out  
Out of my face  
    Onto a prayer mat  
As I thought of how hard I hold on  
And how far wrong I've gone

Wasn't enough though.  
They have high standards  
Like a harsh chef  
    A few things for me to learn yet.  
Few more miseries to peel off.

I'll fall asleep with them still inside me  
They will soak my dreams  
When I'm too gone to realize  
And open enough to know



## Rain-man

It is raining and he stands in a concrete mass.

Steam rises from somewhere and the air is unnaturally warm and thick with humidity. It is dark night, but there are lights. Flood-lights. He's behind a building somewhere in a city, in an empty car-park. And the rain falls, pelting.

Possessed, messenger rain.

It falls continuously and heavily on his head, it is dripping from his nose, and yet he stands there, staring. And always downwards.

What has happened to him?

There is an invisible scar somewhere in him, created by an event or an accumulation of invisible events; and there he remains, with a look of steel but a heart emitting carbon monoxide. His heart emitting a colorless, odorless gas, which hurts him as it seeps around his organs, damaging his mind the longer it remains.

The rain falls and his heart is weak.

From the side of his face, if we look closer, it is still possible to differentiate, with all the spluttering and frenetic specks of water shooting him, a slow, definite tear. It wells up from his side and rolls down, slowly and deliberately, amidst all the noise and artificial light injected into that night. As the earth span and span at nine hundred and forty-three miles per

hour, there he was. Stuck. Stranded.

Gentlest and most vulnerable in pain.

A formless soul-essence, *vague-ing*, inside his human casing.

It rains.

He stands there and where will he go?

Where will he go?



## Woman

*Kai. So So Senba.  
Senai. Chenai. Thaa.*

Far too long  
Dark *dirge-ing* thoughts recurring  
Inner my hearted soul

Far too long  
The woman transfixes and confuses me  
With midnight manipulations  
Of my emptied  
Obedient  
Lover's  
Mind

She has begun me onto a dark road  
Unknowable and  
For her alone

And as I walk it  
Her eyes, the stars  
Are both covered by clouds  
And busy eyeing others.

## Player

There's a piano made of ice. It sits there alone in a house of

Ice

The hours are of ice

The keys are ice-see-through

The black ones and the white ones

When you push them they go down smoothly and silently

Making no noise

And you can feel them melting on your fingertips when you  
push them cold down

Crying keys

It's been a very long time since anyone touched them

They're not used to the warm-blood-touch.

It was a warm wooden piano once

It was a long time ago

People used to play it every night

Chomping down onto it

Chords and clusters and canticles

And it sang loudly – with the people – with laughter

A roaring lion-galaxy

A crazy tickle to shoot death to life

It could go on for days and nights

Years went by where it sang without thinking twice  
Without ever feeling doubt about itself  
.Young, dumb and full of hum.

It's hard to say why or when or how  
Slowly, the people stopped playing it  
Or was it slowly that it stopped wanting to sing?  
Imperceptibly, with the passage of English overcast time  
Which is deceptive and sombre and stoned

The piano began to (k)not.

Something hurt inside  
Its strings began loosening away from the world  
.Discord.  
.Disconnection.

It did not want to sing now  
It wanted nothing. Just cessation

And so one day it just kept silent

Inside, its heart still sung; sung sullen-songs. It still felt. But when it didn't show its feelings, when it didn't sing them, it got colder. Day by day it got colder, stiffer, harder. And over time it froze. And over time it lost its colour. And it lost its wood, and ivory. And it became ice.

Silent piano of ice.

And now it is melting, as an innocent young boy of the new

world pushes gently on its keys. It can't help but melt, the boy is so persistent and innocent, his touches seem to insist that the piano show life, respond, sing- even softly. The piano has lost its voice and its songs.

But now, as the boy, again, presses firmly but gently, all the different shapes, on all areas, the piano feels something come alive within it.

A death.

Progress.

A natural extension

The acceptable next-phase.

Melting was the first duty. The piano had never melted before and each time the boy pushed a key, with an expectation of sound, another drip formed and soon fell into a wet puddle. *Drip*. A sound, at least. The boy noticed it and suddenly stopped. The ice piano had been frosty before he sat down, and now it was wet, much more shiny.

The heart of the piano, behind and below the icy keys,  
by the child's knees,

was deep inside the piano's center, it's chest.

From there, the warm maroon-red light began to phade-in, glowing with no sound. The piano didn't quite know what it was doing. It was a very definite deep-red light and it glistened sharply through the wet keys. The whole piano, every iced surface, was touched by this light- glowing

strongly, calmly and silently- like a presence. The piano was dying; this was its symphony. This was what it had left to give, this red glow was its love, the song of pain that the heart could never find lyrics for, the feelings that were never brought out for display.

Deep night fell and the weeping moon shined bright upon the glass house. Inside, the red light shone brighter than before, burning off its last skin, burning away its final heart, blazing its goodbye.



drawn  
will you love me?

Un-cold icicles  
Trickle and spittle icicles  
Shoot around within you  
Like rain on a windy day  
Sometimes pull you t'ward  
Sometimes guideth away

Periods, Phases, Seasons

## The Baking of Bread

1

There's an Italian-American man with an  
Extravagant 1800's moustache  
He wears a white-shirt covered by black tank top. He's  
Closing up for the night

(Big old fashioned clanking iron keys)

Locking up and whistling cheerfully

As if the sun will always rise tomorrow.

2

Could I go home and lie down without a single worry?

Can I be one flat, even teaspoon of fine flour?  
And can I lay inside that spoon for the rest of time in an  
Eternal kitchen  
Without being blown off  
Decayed or saturated and dissolved in somebody's  
Transitory liquid?

I do desire freedom from this sentence of  
80-odd years in a bread-tin  
Being baked by elementals and atmospherics  
And slowly puffing up like an  
Unhappy rich man  
Who has a monopoly over some thing or other

At the expense of the whole wide world.

Being eaten is not my fear.  
.Everything dies.

I just don't want my death to be the conclusion of a lifetime  
of broiling.



## Dream

I keep thinking I am getting carried away with symbolism

Not practical enough

And I take a course or class to dissect a square  
Or another shape, to study its multiple parts

But each time, the shape (coloured-in solidly with red) always ends up becoming see-through whilst the teacher is talking. Whilst everyone else in the class is listening and noting.

Mind keeps widening, phasing beyond the square  
And its parts  
And the class

Widening or floating to the top of the room  
Until I eventually end up at the very same point once again  
Saying, either with sad-resignation / electric-exasperation  
Things like

“Nothing really matters”

or

“It’s all the same”

## No Rhythm

There is no rhythm to the logic of the illusions of this life.

It is frequently interrupted by events so blatantly requiring a metaphysical, philosophical and spiritual reading, that the other things (proofs, daily truths) suddenly cease to be the whole show.

### In London

There is, as ever, a ghost that lives within all things

Like the centre of a kiwi fruit, it is sometimes discernible  
It sometimes offers itself up  
But it usually does so in full knowledge that ultimately  
We will not know what to make of it

And verily, we know nothing of the subtlety of the  
White center of kiwi  
With its strange taste of sweet-negative  
Of solid-air.

And so it is with the strange hearts that beat in cat-like  
women who don't smile and look as though they don't belong  
here on Earth, even though they walk down Oxford Street.

And with the heaviness  
Which finds a home in my frowning forehead  
In my static, ambiguous heart.

## Dream

There is a flooded town and a skinny Indian or Brasilian street-child, standing on top of something that would normally be above his own height, a car roof perhaps. He has a gun in his hand. He points it down to a pipe, which is just under the water, which is litting and coming close to the surface every now and then, moving calmly up and down. The sun shines on this thick old pipe. He shoots at it, thinking that it would act –somehow– as a plug, draining all the water away. Unfortunately, a redneck-looking Texan policeman is also floating in the water, just past the gas-pipe and further away from the boy. He looks dead, for his body is floating lifelessly, the water making those same calm sounds around him, however he is secretly alive. He's pretending to be still; full of mistrust. The bullet the boy shot towards the pipe actually goes directly into the policeman. The child is aware of his mistake. His child-like lack of co-ordination has let him down. The suggestion of blood is there, although we don't really see it, and the man begins to sink even more, as if he is now really dead. As his body, head and face sink below and out of sight, he slowly, blindly, raises his hand up above the surface of the water. With it, he flicks a lit match up towards the boy, with perfect evil precision, as if to cause one final act of revenge and destruction before leaving this world. The match flies directly towards the boy's mouth, where a lit cigarette sits between his too-young-to-smoke lips. The match is going to make the cigarette explode as if the cigarette were filled with petrol. The policeman intends to kill the boy. And it does explode. But the boy jumps down under the water just as the fire begins to spread. He is safe.

## The Night Cutter

For Ben aka Serocell

I'm alone with these bad dreams and these sentiments  
Floating through me like the dark wine of witches

The oil that blood is spilt into  
The wounds that gush  
The mind that's mush  
The feeling of too much

.The emptied soul.

Slice through my beaten slave body like pastrami slices

I'm not meat, not a human or a chicken

I'm slices of a man.  
Wafer thin and inconsequential  
You pass me in the street and

Don't glance again.

I'm a wayfarer on the road of eternal midnight-dark  
City dark with  
Clouds and lights obstructing the stars

Built-up buildings  
Push in on you  
Push your shoulders in  
Squeezing you narrow

Your narrow road

All you hear are the small things  
All that exists is pettiness and hamburgers  
And the gossip is reality

There's nothing more than the cheap pop music that plays on  
the tinny speakers

That's all there is

There's no salvation or salve for these self-inflicted nations  
Halved and quartered and sixteenth'd by the  
False idols of opinions and theories which  
Divide and splinter continuously like a nightmare road  
Going  
Nowhere.

Going nowhere.

Road kill  
Snail on a hill  
Not still, but stilled

Your removed will

## My Incredible Career

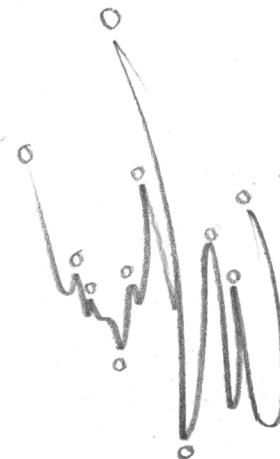
“Get that drink down ya!!!”

He wailed it like a war-cry which resounded around the room  
Which contained no one but him

He got the drink down him and then shot himself in the head

The End.

“His mother was a very strange lady....”



## Poem & Diary

1

And where will you go?  
Now that your pockets are meaningless  
Now that your surfing is seasonless  
Where will you pump?  
What will you stick?

Open your stomach  
Show me your pearls!  
Show me the blood  
Soak me unto

Levitated. Lift unto you

Union: something from turquoise to blue

Lows of my flame – Burn the flag

2

“I can even feel it, my own soul rebelling against itself, not doing what it knows is right.... It’s like a man who’s trying to get somewhere, and at the same time, he’s beating the hell out of his legs with a spiked stick.”

3

‘Tathagata’ is a Sanskrit word, I think. It means:  
‘The man who disappeared.’

I think

### Freestyle to an imaginary hip-hop beat

Go hum on a planet of oxygen  
Make use of the need to breathe  
Hurt me and I'll hurt you too  
Forgive me and I'll say sorry first  
I'm so bored of the stolen purse  
And the random curse  
And the joy dispersed  
And the negative verse  
And the you-you me-me  
Square-go-round  
Pushing the templates of our own sound  
Vanity-voter, for himself alone  
Stoned and marbled and dried of water.

### Sentence

I've got an engine that's bloodthirsty!

## Freestyle to an imaginary hip-hop beat on a National Express Coach

I push and squeeze / And rinse and pince  
I am no prince / And I've lost that glimpse  
A smoker's cough / puts me in place  
Limping rat in the human kiss-chase  
Under a cave / I've lost my kingdom  
Last year was burn-out / now I'm cinders  
Lying on a damp cold field of English grass  
Naked as the clouds turn up for daytime  
Black crows / circling the gallows  
Crack hoes runnin' after skinhead boyfriends  
Been up all night / killing time with darkness  
This ain't lifetime / I been dry and starvin'

Hanging onto the cold steel bar  
Condensation and it's slippery far down  
Below. Stars up above look low  
The weight of my evil  
Pull me down like the anvil  
Earth is a great slab-stone of witches

The pavements meant for my broken thud  
They made that pavement just to see me fall  
And the grey contrasts with-my-red-blood  
And the silent stone hears my broken call

\_\_\_\_\_ is the crow-sound I make  
As my body's ripped in-two pieces of snake.

### Hell in Barcelona

Who's the pirate, pain-full?  
The circuit-breather  
The soul-believer

Who's the buggered in Baghdad?  
The table cleaner  
The dream perceiver

Where's the childish day-fulls?  
The pocket sweeters  
The energy-seepers

Where's the virgin feeling?  
The cloudy dreaming  
The un-concealing

## Aliving

1

Wherfore art Thou?

2

I've said the word 'before'  
In my head enough times  
And now it rhymes with silence and has lost all meaning

Before is not yesterday  
Before is when the whistle in your heart had a different  
melody

3

Yes is not Yes. It is breathing. And believing.

4

It is generally accepted that one cannot expect anything to grow if one waters a patch of desert sand. The same is not expected of fertile soil in greener areas.

Having said that, so-called atheists become believers,  
So-called believers become atheists.

## Toward Solidity

When you seek, or even wish for, the cessation of combat, the grounding of thought, the firmament of family, success and permanence

Seeking to pick up and gather your pieces of self

The road toward solidity is not flat and easy

And all of these noble intentions begin at the same moment:

Upon waking from dreams, your fading into this world begins and the temporary fiction is forgotten in favour of the longer one ahead, the one surrounded by these same walls, same people and these passing days of consequence and monotony. In those first untouched moments, your eyes open and are soft; your soul, that of a child scared to step forward. You're right to be hesitant about walking into this messy cake mixture where your hands will stick to things with every movement. It is correct to be scared. In those moments with open eyes, you see not the walls and the pillows, but your determination. It is from here, now, that the decision will be made. From this moment that greatness and happiness will begin to unfold their complex incident lines.

By deciding yes.

By not lying there to die.

By intending to shower.

## Lost Afghan Lost / National Galleries 'Afghanistan' Exhibit

I came to be  
Born in a foreigner's hand

And here, I'm far from home



Blue Balkhi-blood of light is the  
Building block  
Beginning of my belonging

.Bactria.



Despite the fact that you and I, my dears, have  
Grown together  
Bound by watching Happy Days and Star Trek  
Laughing wryly at Cheers  
And later Frasier

There *is* a divergence

You see

Over here, Rumi is read

But in here  
    deep in here  
                he is bled



With these 20 fingers and nails  
On lucky occasions  
I stroke my Truheart     Whene'er I  
Catch a glimpse of a historical fragment which  
Teases me with the whiff of a credible origin

## The Deathbed Tissues

For DS

1

I'm sold

Gone for nigh-ver

So where will you be, my love?

One more time, a squeeze forever  
Where we dissolve

2

Crying won't bring the finalysis.  
Time, your beloved  
Only time  
Will kiss your health return

3

Kindle-rain  
Kindle-tone

Failing God  
You are alone

## Twenty-Three

1

What a world we live in  
Where planes lower themselves from the sky

2

Let in time

3

Don't close  
Don't assume  
Know.  
Never let the sun set in stone.

4

Melodious heart  
Blaze the sidewalks  
Change the path  
Revivify thought

Air up. Soft-soaking, inhaling power, swooping upwards as a bird, showing your breast and puffed out chest. You are something, to assert yourself in this way. Naked warrior ascending. You've been wounded. Now move in retaliation. Now swoop with power, clever and agile, making progress, making of existence. A life of resistance. Or the start of a life, through resistance.

I aspire to you, formless notion of thunder-soul. You are meat & drums.

## Silver Surfer

The Silver Surfer glides across the dark half of the Earth from space. There is no moon-light, no star-light, no rain, no ground.

The glide is smooth, and the airless existence parts as his handsome face pushes through, acquiescing to his forward, searching motion. The Silver Surfer searches endlessly. His lips are not lips that speak. His formless heart floats as liquid inside his reflective body. He is a mirror unto the worlds. He is not he. He is what all else is, what all else needs and dreams. He does not exist.

The Silver Surfer pierces space and soars across Universes and Galaxies as time endlessly folds on. Why was he created?

He was created as the embodiment of desire. The longing for meaning. The silent search for soul. He surfs toward Creation because he longs to belong. Unconsciously, he is surfing toward his Creator.

## In Houston

For Lawrence 'Ytzakh' Braithwaite aka Ishaq

He fell down into the water. It was done purposefully. It was a brave thing he did, arms stretched out on each side Christ-like, tilting the body backwards until it was past the point of no return, gravity pulling him away, his eyes away from the Earth and the last sky swooping over him. The last clouds, the last brilliant-blue, the last sun, maybe, too.

He dropped, and the first thing he said was the word GOD, stretched out for a long time. It was the only thing he said, the only thing he felt to say, as he fell. He had never fallen for that long before. This was all new to him. It was a waterfall he was falling down. He could have landed twice, on different levels, different jump-off points, but he passed them by, kept on falling until he reached the very last body of moving river water. The very deepest part. Once plunged under the blue water, a white cloud of bubbles surrounded him. They tickled slightly and for a moment he felt they protected him. Soon they were gone though. The water felt as if it wasn't meant to be in that place. This wasn't where water was. He looked around and it all seemed odd. He was panicking too, because this wasn't where he was used to being. He was uncomfortable, struggling, scared. And alive. For so long, for what seemed like so long, he had expected to begin surfacing. He kept thinking that his body should come up. But it didn't. He was still definitely under.

Suddenly a feeling of ease and peace found him.

Everything is going to be okay. The struggle is actually needless. There's no need for it.

Somehow he began to breathe. He didn't taste the air, or feel it in his nose or the back of his throat- he was underwater. But he did feel the enormous ease that breathing gives. To breathe, to breathe is to be allowed. As soon as he began this he felt the surface was near. He looked up with his eyes opened and the sunlight began kissing his whole face.

Then he was above.

He was right, it was not a natural place for water. It was a highway, filled with water. There were hundreds of people walking along it, but all you could see were their heads, tilted backwards toward the sky, carefully so that they could breathe through their noses. Now they all wanted to breathe. They shuffled forwards slowly like cars in a traffic jam, water up to their chins. Sometimes he could hear the sounds of the people who had just arrived coming from behind him. It was the sound of heads popping up out of the water like melons. It sounded like an inward splash.

The sun was shining on that highway, but somehow it was a distant sun. It no longer meant the same thing.

As the people bobbed along they were all muttering things to themselves. He could hear many things in his local area, and they mostly went like this:

"Theft, arson, breaking-and-entering, and now suicide!"

He could well have said 'Pride, ego, misery and now suicide!' None of the people who muttered these things sounded very happy with themselves. Nonetheless, they were alive, and trying their hardest to breathe as they walked like penguins along the ocean-highway.

He heard a noise and looked behind him to see a police officer. She was on higher ground than him and the others, wading through the water, which was just above her waist. Her dark blue police uniform was even darker where the water had soaked it. The sun was on her and she wore very black sunglasses that covered her eyes entirely. She moved as if she had no emotion. She was coming for him. A voice in his head said 'We all just arrived here, it's so unfair that she's coming to get me first.' And with that thought, she floated off elsewhere. What she was doing didn't seem all that important to her or anyone else. And they all kept on moving.

On the inside of the highway, closest to the edge, someone was doing a backstroke in the water. Swimming. He hadn't thought of that. The sun glistened over the water near her. It was orange and going down. He looked past her to see, a little below, and yet completely parallel with the water-highway, a real highway. This highway was empty except for a single car, which sped along it, and it was all silhouetted by the setting sun, so that the only thing he could see was the shape of the car, a family saloon/estate car, and its shadow, which was cast diagonally across itself. It was going very fast, although the driver was constantly looking up in the direction

of the water-travelers. He was worried, and the way he constantly moved the steering wheel ever so slightly in each direction, jerking it nervously, made his discomfort apparent. He was doing all he could to keep up with the water-travelers, even though they were slowly wading through the water, and he was speeding in a car. The man in the car and the water travelers were clearly on different planes of existence, no amount of worrying on the driver's part could change that fact. It was not his fault though. He needed to know that the lady who was back-stroking was going to be okay. She was better than okay, she had the presence of mind to backstroke when everyone else was just shuffling along unimaginatively like lemmings or lambs. Slaves. She was young, the back-stroking girl. The driver rolled his window down hurriedly and with concern, to shout something out of the window, across the highway. Even though they were separated by great distances, they could communicate.

"Why are you backstroking? Be careful, **be careful!** You might drown!!"

"It's okay dad, don't worry. I'm going to be fine." Even and calm, and totally assured was she.

They kept on walking toward this goal, the sun eternally setting, their last sun. Some were nervous, some were regretful, some were backstroking.

## Twenty-Three

1

Sometimes I stare out into an expansive sky  
And see perfect summer trees with the sun inside them  
And these things, they beat me

And it feels good to be no one  
It reminds you of the hierarchy.

2

I've been still  
Staring  
As the world has moved  
Traveled past me

I've been distant as I did the distance

Boiling softly, charging  
Never discharging. Never starting. Only parking  
Not partaking. Never relating. Waiting  
Stumbling, limping, thinking of thinking, softly sinking

Roaming the Earth with a closed mouth  
Staring at the colourful people of the South  
Poor people / Happy / Me looking / Them living

The life of drums is eternal  
Music is always marching with you  
Even when you cannot hear

## Campfire Alone

*Sun-unified centre*

My darkest embers  
Like angels, swirl around the afternoon air  
Late afternoon  
Sombre and sedate  
I breathe in the vintage pain  
An antique from antiquity

Filtrate these experiences  
Expose them to the air  
Make them hurt less  
Make them public

Burning angels they swirl in the world, ashes

Collectively hurting then collectively losing their illumination  
Fading out t'ward the faramoush<sup>1</sup> night



As each day continues  
I am a stronger boy  
Hugging his mother's head  
Guiding the world again

---

<sup>1</sup> Meaning 'to forget' in Dari

## Diary

Last night I was so unhappy. I feel okay now. I've been laughing today. Laughing hysterically, alone, around the house, at nothing in particular. At random statements. Just now I was walking through North Street when a charity worker ignored me, as they always seem to do now (they used to stop me just as much as everyone else, and I used to try and avoid them just as much too). Perhaps there is a faraway look in my eyes. Or more likely, an intimidating look. Or maybe I look angry. Or maybe it's the rapping which makes people think I'm mad. Anyway, after I walked past her and she said nothing, I also noticed, at the same second, another lady flyer-ing outside HSBC bank. I thought she'd give me a flyer (another thing I don't get as much anymore) but as soon as I walked towards her, she suddenly packed up her cards in her rucksack and walked off. So it was like a double... I can't say *disappointment*, considering I want neither to donate to any charity or receive any flyers. But there was still a vague feeling of having missed out. On eye-contact. Human interaction, I suppose. Yes, that's it. So, this all happened in the span of about two or three seconds. Just after she left, I said out loud to myself, 'So much for Mr. life of the party!'

I have no idea where that statement came from. But it made me laugh. I like to repeat vacuous, stereotypical, common phrases out loud. I've noticed I do it a lot. Because this life is so funny. The mundane elements of it are so charming. So ultimately meaningless. But there is a place for ornamental things. For embellishments. Trimmings.

With fingers  
With fingers  
Universes Pearl

There's distance  
Meaning  
Depth of world

There is a bird. There is a bird!

It is flying. It is flying!

Through the sun. *Through* the sun!

Do you want it?

Do you want it?

O  
God  
Divide the Love

Conquer these Stones  
And  
Command the Dance

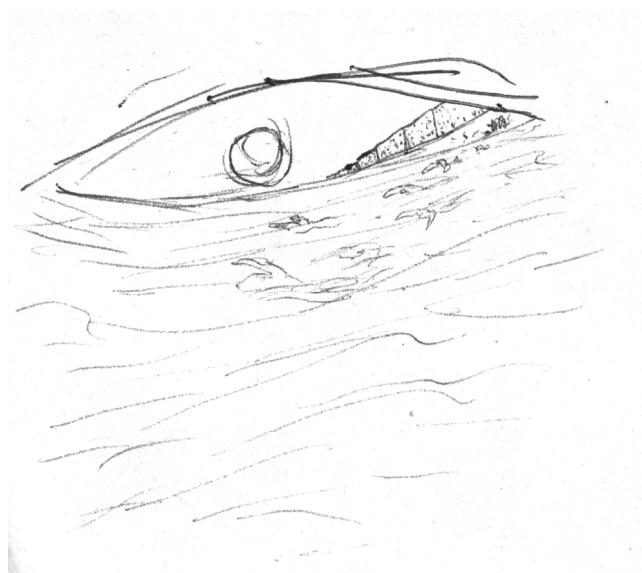
Don't let us go on like this  
Thinking we can save ourselves

Don't let us think that we've stopped Bleeding  
Or  
That we've ever really Laughed

### Song for whistling

Don't you think to stay (here)  
Don't you think to stay

This old dog bones been and dried  
Let it age  
Move away.



### Song for singing

If there's a way  
To sing my despair  
I won't try  
To keep  
It there

If there's a way  
To whole my hand  
I won't stand  
To weep or to  
Stare

If there's a tomb  
I won't believe you  
I won't distrust you  
Just live through my  
Day

If I've a chance  
I would rejoice and  
Turn up my voice and  
Let Majesties  
Rise

You're not walking, working or dying. You're flying

These molecules gather.

They don't just hang around  
On the street corners  
On the everyday greys  
In the grime and the laze

They gather.  
Fizz together, and  
Zoom on up the green bottle

We don't feel their hyper-activity, their urgency  
We're too dulled, dense  
Doused in dust and monotony, to see that  
The particles within and around us are forming shapes  
Shooting to the apex of the triangle  
Wildly rushing to the surface and trying so hard to  
Lick the stars

There's meaning, shape and form in your every day norm.  
There's chances per second to be reborn.

So accept, when to you I say,  
“Happy birthday. Happy birthday, bird.”

## Star Chambers

.Star chambers on Earth.

The moonlight enters the domed igloo chamber of clay  
Blue glow rubs the rounded ceiling and sloping sides

The fresh moon, a giant  
Centered perfectly outside the miniature window with its  
Delicately curving, arched top

The window is showing us a dark blue sky

What time is it? It could be any time in the endless night

It is infinity time

What is the feeling?  
The feeling is union-yearning and  
Turning to dust before God

Exploding into non-physical atoms and hovering as a soul  
As a star in the center of the clay chamber

And now it's not the moonshine inside that glows  
But your star-soul  
    Hovering in the center  
Making no noise  
Doing something bigger than smiling  
Emanating something larger than local-love  
Whispering something quieter than night

Look at it hover

Look at light

This round chamber is located amidst a  
Wilderness of sand

From miles away the stars' light  
Bursting from within the chamber  
Can be seen  
On the distant, flat horizon that brave travelers are  
Privileged to see

All the way up to the sky above  
Where the wild old stars look down in awe at a starry soul

Freshly annihilated human  
Newly anointed star

The wind weeps not

Release the Earth, give birth to the Universe  
Unclenched fists hold the hand of time



### Great Spangled Fritillary

Board the black wave of Certitude  
Search through its dying, flying embers  
Thrust your hands into its liquid, digging and digging

The black oil that you float on  
Riding atop the crest of the black tidal wave  
Some wild young Prince in ascension  
To a destiny none can deny.

Barely conscious . So in tune

.Close them.

Hear the disruptions in the wind  
That help you see with them closed  
Help you picture form, movements  
In line.         Everything is before the black eyes

Your still body is a statue of golden blood

The wind collapses on your torso  
Dispersing in submission to you, now

And your slow arm, rising to point forwards, is a rock.





The author looking at the Sea from atop a Car Park, Brighton, 2008

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