

Spectator at the Musallah

Shab-e-Barat 2023

There were twenty minutes left in my body.
Everyone loves God and its people better than I could ever do.
From outside the musallah, I was looking inside the musallah.
Passengers huddled and hunched onto the ground— an infinity
of frozen lakes in their bones. Moving like clocks. Never as much as God
but I want to be loved too. But not like a prostration
but like a human reaching for a river. A vast resource
worthy for submission. I submit
to the shell of my mother's first body.
How beautiful she was. How beautiful I want to be too.
The inane unkindness of my mind clings like sweat to my skin.
Shining like water to moonlight. It's everywhere.
The death of crossings. The smell of transience.
The email that says you owe much more to the world
than it can give back. A byproduct of aging
is when I started choosing to do easy things—
the dishwasher, Grammarly, 20 whole hours of medicated sleep.
Sometimes a dream comes:
I am in the bathroom with a tweezer— my face is full of hair.
Without break. Single long rivers.
Un peuple malheureux fait les grands artistes.
Musset is soaked to his bones.
An unhappy nation makes great artists.
My mother is soaked in me.
ناخوش قوم عظیم فنکار بناتی ہے۔
I am soaked in God. Beckoning His miracle
to stretch apart every flooding.
The musallah is still there.
Of course. Where else could it go?