

Aqeela

“An emptiness that has persisted for centuries, comes this way and spreads its wings wide. When the wings come to rest even the ground gives way. Nothing remains. But, when did *Nothing* get so heavy?”

Shehla

“Doors are always there for us to open. No corridor leads to a blank wall - never. Late last night, when I sat down in the quiet of my room, there came a whisper from a far corner. ‘Come,’ it said and without a thought I followed. A corridor beyond, filled with dark shadows and bright sun light. Whose home? I inquired. ‘Yours,’ the whisper replied.”

Driving to Mariam's

Days, they swerve into nights. Nights, a residue of days. Endless hours of wakeful delirium and confused thoughts. A dreamer passes by, another one follows. No word, no sound, not a whisper. Sun pours its warmth into flesh and eyes squint, trying to focus on the distant plane.

Mariam tells a story

"she said she felt fine, as she slowly sipped her large tumbler of ice cold water, a crystal clear liquid that reflected her stark face. Fine, just fine. Only, don't say another word, don't ask another question, don't touch. For the world is falling and she is falling with it."

Mariam.

“The rain came today, beating down with glorious fury.

I wonder at my own writing, its worth and non-worth. Who do I write for - to what end? Will any one read these scraps, put them together, see the pictures take shape?

I detest words. They don't say what I want them to. And yet, it seems important to write.

As women, as people, we keep so much silence gathered around us - within us. So many secrets we carry to our graves. There is a limit to how much one can bear. Now, we must work to expose them, whisper them all out.”

Shehla.

“...Another night, I sat in front of many doors and pleaded for strength. One door, so large, dark and strong. I feared its magic within. Some one kept calling my name. But I dared not reach out, turn the knob and open.

My legs were caught in the whispering warnings of those unseen faces. They forbade me to seek entrance. Then threatened expulsion from their homes.

It is Love! I cried from the corner of my soul. “It is a heinous crime,” came their reply, reeking disgust.

I could smell their burnt emptiness. A stench greater than the molding corpses of those who extinguish them selves.”

“Now I walk past that door, turning my head low in shame and fear. They tell me to wait and not give up hope. They say soon love will sweep me off the ground.

But I know, their words have no meaning. Love was lost that night when I could not open its door.”