41. EVENING

It is as if each tree
Were an old deserted shrine,
Unlighted, long since pining
To be free to crumble away—
Each rooftop gaping, every
Portal at the last gasp;
And heaven a sort of priest,
Squatting since god knows when
Under the eaves, brow daubed
With scarlet, body with ashes,
Speechless, head hanging down;
—As if behind the curtain
There were some conjuror
Drawing such webs of magic
Over the universe,

EVENING

It is as if every tree is some temple,
Some ruined, until old temple,
Which since long is seeking excuses for crumbling;
Each roof torn, every door is at its last breath.

The sky is some priest who at the foot of each roof-wall,
On his body ashes smeared, on his forehead vermilion smeared,
Head drooping, is seated silent, there is no knowing since when.

It is as if behind the curtain there is some magician
Who has so spread over the heavens a net of magic,

SHÂM

Is taraf hai kē harēk pēr koī mandir hai,
Koī ujā hūā, be-nūr purāṇā mandir,
Dhūndā hai jo kharābī ke bahāne kab se;
Chāk har bāṃ, harēk dar kā dam-e-ākhīr hai.

5 Āsmān koī purohit hai jo har bāṃ tale,
Jism par rākh male, māthe pē sindūr male,
Sār nigūn baiṭā hai chup-chāp na jāne kab se.

Is taraf hai kē pas-e-parda koī sāhir hai
Jis-ne āfaq pē phailāyā hai yūn sihr kā dām,
And time's skirt and this evening's
Were stitched together so close,
That twilight will never end,
Darkness will never come,
Night never decline, or morning
Ever return. . . . Heaven's prayer
Is that the spell may break,
The chain of silence snap,
Time's skirt be disentangled—
Some wailing conch-shell blare,
Some jingling anklet speak,
Some idol waken, or some
Swart votaress lift her veil.

10 The evening's skirt is so joined with the skirt of time,
Now evening will never be extinguished and darkness never come,
Now night will never decline nor morning come.

Heaven has the hope that this spell may be broken,
That the chain of silence may be snapped, the skirt of time be freed,
15 That some conch-shell may make outcry, some anklet speak,
Some idol awaken, some swarthy-beauty open her veil.

Dāman-e-waqt se paivast hai yūn dāman-e-shām,
Ab kabhi shām bujhegi na andherā hogā,
Ab kabhi rāt dhalegi na sawerā hogā.

Āsmān ās liye hai kē ye jādū tūte,
Chup ki zanjir kaṭe, waqt kē dāman chhūte,
15 De koī sarikh duhā'ī, koī pāyal bole,
Koī but jāge, koī sānwallī ghūngāt khole.