

SIDDIQUA SHABNAM

Two Poems*

He heightens my feeling to the pain of our kinship:
How my tears flow through the span of his memory.

A shadow slides close behind my every step;
At the edge of my days and nights lives a ghost.

My being burns with love for its kindred earth
Yet an ocean spreads before me its distant call.

Beyond the turmoil of the world, a figure
Stands beckoning from the sand of loneliness.

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Time is short: speak or it will go unsaid;
 Else a regret will weigh in the heart,
 Seeking you forever in an empty house.
This mad heart of mine will be alone with thought;
And this, for a while only, then even this shall fade:
 Between you and I shall live
 An undying space.
In the dew of these eyes old dreams shall blur;
In a desert of silence shall roam the ghost of voice
 Every tone shall die as day melts into day.

—*Translated by M.A.R. Habib*

* Both poems are originally titled “Ghazal” and appear in the poet’s collection *Tanbā’ī* (Hyderabad Deccan: Maktab-e She’r-o-Ḥikmat, 1986) on pp. 36 and 54, respectively.