

KUMAR PASHI

Six Poems

AFFAIR¹

agreed
your body my body will become a heap of ashes one day
which pitiless gusts of wind will scatter
on unknown mountain-tops
nothing will last in Time
but the searing silhouettes of my voice
shall rove
in your quest

DELIVERANCE²

how splendid the azure of this sky
how dazzling the stars seem to me today
show me the unrevealed vista behind the stars
let me reflect, where the precincts of the worlds of savor
shall end
where shall the cessation of the journey's splendor occur
let me go there and sense
what all is wanting: in me (or in you)

this world (the world behind the stars)
is known to me, but still I feel, each thing in it

¹"Amr," from the poet's collection *Purānē Mausamōṅ kī Āvāz* (Delhi: Nāzish Book Center, 1966), 22.

²"Najāt," from *ibid.*, 24–25.

will appear alien and invisible to me
will beguile my heart
who knows what sweet spell this is
you are by my side
but your body can be seen
merging with the mists of the horizon
casting aside this shimmering sapphire hem of stars
now veil me too in these very same radiant mists
veil me too

VEIL³

if you appeared before me in some lucid form, then it would be
something
in my mind's eye, making you sit across from me
I would reveal thousands of your own mysteries to you
and, astounded, you would keep gazing at me—at my face
you are shrouded in a veil
and what is this veil
untouched hem of the wind
now what secret of the heart shall I divulge to the wind?
an eon is needed, when for that one moment I,
as a spell of breeze, will waft on expansive skies
and these seven oceans shall churn in my shadow
in whose waters, soaking myself, I
shall leap over all these voids of the seven skies
and the veils amidst shall rise

AFTER THE JOURNEY⁴

rising from this very dust one day
when I called out to someone

³“Pardah,” from *ibid.*, 37.

⁴“Safar kē Ba‘d,” from *ibid.*, 45.

the seven skies stared with longing
 winds kissed my body
 and the waves of the sea extended their swaying slender hands
 the blue trees on the mountains
 whispered among themselves,
 beamed, smiled

but my mind
 laden with the scent of sweat
 who knows whom it sought

having made a journey of untold years, today
 I ponder this:
 where have I left my voice?

PERFORMER⁵

so I said:
 in the bosom of each star
 who knows how many seasons of Time are veiled.
 let the distances fold a little—maybe
 from somewhere afar, some unknown gust of wind
 may waft over, and then
 the aroma of these lands' wheat may treasure you
 where the story of an enigmatic Man's tragedy,
 since untold years, thirsts for words
 who, up till now, has received mere aid of gestures' crutches

on hearing this, he burst out in laughter
 kept laughing thus for long—and then
 bending down, he whispered in my ear:
 if you wish to see that enigmatic Man
 then behold: I am that Man.

⁵“Adākār,” from *ibid.*, 64–65.

DIFFERENCE OF TWO CIRCLES⁶

leaving the house, when I was
aspiring to learn your whereabouts from the moon and the stars
right then
in the awe-stricken ring of these mountains
the summons of the horizon drew me
I alone
cast over all things
lost in the transience of seasons
disengaged from the modes of speaking
with feet on the ocean's breast
was desirous for death
silhouettes of directions were caressing my body
silence panted in my soul
each thing
was drawn together
in the enigmatic circle of young arms
where I was absent
where only you were there

—*Translated by Riyaz Latif*

⁶“Dō Dā'irōñ kā Farq, from *ibid.*, 85–86.