

PARVEEN SHAKIR

Two Poems

TO A VICTORIAN¹

Rather than keeping me
Tucked away
In your heart
Instead of wasting your life like this
Trying to practice the mores of the Victorians
In the reign of Elizabeth II
Scouring world literature left right and center
For the correct form of a one-word conversation
Rather than lingering long lonesome hours
'Neath my window each year
First day of Spring

Just come suddenly
One day
From nowhere in particular
Take me
In your arms
Turn a perfect circle!

¹“Ēk Viḳṭōriyan Shakḥṣ Sē,” from the poet’s collection *Khud-Kalāmī* (Islamabad: Murad Publications, 1990), 60.

ADVICE²

Our love has died its clinical death!
How much longer can this respirator
Of excuses and diversions
Keep it alive
It is better
To pull the plug on our hypocrisy
And let a beautiful emotion die in dignity!

—*Translated by Rehan Qayoom*

²“Mashvara,” from the poet’s collection *Inkār* (Islamabad: Murad Publications, 1990), 184.