

You know people say, "you're a Muslim, you must be from Pakistan", no I am a Muslim, I am not from Pakistan. There are more Muslims now in India now than there are in Pakistan, which will tell us incredible things about people wanting to break India into Pakistan, which was done on religious grounds, which I think was very stupid, it was the worst thing to happen to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and so on. But I did go to Pakistan, the only time in my life, in 1994 to attend the wedding of a cousin-niece. It was in August. Usually weddings in the plains of India are held, in India, Pakistan whatever in the winter because of the cooler climate, not in the summer. In Kashmir, of course, they are held in the summer, so I say that's why Kashmir should be independent. This is an elaborate kind of sestina from Dante invented called a Canzone, and it's called "After the August Wedding in Lahore, Pakistan". Lahore is this very charming city in Pakistan. Kipling has a lot of stuff written around it. I won't explain the form to you, hear certain sounds repeated, okay? There are references to a couple of lines from Emily Dickinson, the two of the Kashmir references, I have a reference to the Perfume Cašmir, with that wonderful diacritical mark over the S. I remember two years ago at Heathrow Airport I bought that perfume for my mother. I love that diacritical mark, my computer doesn't have it so I envy whoever has it. I mean I can really get off on these diacritical marks. I told my student often composition fall in love with colons and dashes, it will really make your sensuous lives, if you learn enough about it. Anyway.

After the August wedding in Lahore, Pakistan

we all---Save the couple!---returned to pain,
some in Massachusetts, some in Kashmir
where, wet by turns, Order's dry campaign
had glued petals with bullets to each pane---
Sarajevo Roses! A gift to glass,
that city's name. What else breaks? A lover's pain!
But happiness? Must it, too, bring pain?
Question I may ask because of a night ---
by ice-sculptures, all my words sylvanite
under one gaze that filled my glass with pain.
That thirst haunts as does the fevered dancing, flames dying among orchids flown in from Sing-

apore! Sing then, not of the promising
but the Promised End. Of what final pain,
what image of that horror can I sing?
To be forgotten the most menacing!
Those "Houseboat Days in the Vale of Kashmir,"
for instance, in '29: Did they sing
just of love then, or was love witnessing
its departure for other thirsts--- the glass
of Dal Lake ruffled half by "Satin Glass,"
that chandeliered boat barely focusing
on emptiness--- last half of any night?
In Lahore the chanteuse crooned "Stop the Night"---

the groom's request--after the banquet. Night,
that Empress, is here, your bride. She will sing!
Her limbs break like chrysanthemums. O Night,
what hints have been passed in the sky tonight?
The stars so quiet, what galaxies of pain

leave them unable to prophesy this night?
With a rending encore, she closed the night.
There was, like this, long ago in Kashmir,
a moment --- after a concert --- outside Kashmir
Book Shop that left me stranded, by midnight,
in a hotel mirror. Would someone glass
me in ---from what? Filled, I emptied my glass,
lured by a stranger's eyes into their glass.
There, nothing melted, as in Lahore's night:
Heat had brought sweat to the lip of my glass
but sculptures kept iced their aberrant glass.
To be forgotten my most menacing
image of the End --- expelled from the glass
of someone's eyes as if no full-length glass
had held us, safe, from political storms? Pain,
then, becomes love's thirst--- the ultimate pain
to lose a stranger! O, to have said, glass
in hand, "Where Thou art---that---is Home---/Cashmere---
or Calvary---the same"! In the Casmir
and Poison and Brut air, my rare Cashmere
thrown off, the stranger knew my arms are glass,
that banished from Eden (on earth: Kashmir)
into the care of storms (it rains in Kashmir,
in Lahore, and here in Amherst tonight),
in each new body I would drown Kashmir.
A brigadier says, The boys of Kashmir
break so quickly, we make their bodies sing,
on the rack, till no song is left to sing.
"Butterflies pause/On their passage Cashmere---"
And happiness: must it only bring pain?

The century is ending. It is pain
from which love departs into all new pain:
Freedom's terrible thirst, flooding Kashmir,
is bringing love to its tormented glass.
Stranger, who will inherit the last night
of the past? Of what shall I not sing, and sing?