**Skyline of a Prayer**  
  
Fajr azaan breaks  
the sky into two.  
The lit half is a prayer.  
  
Its glowing mouth spreads  
through my language  
and settles in my chest.  
  
Maybe God is  
the singular breath  
that floods you whole?  
  
Someone exhales  
a muted ardas  
somewhere.  
  
It rises to the ether  
and becomes  
the sun.  
  
All faith  
prerequisites  
abandonment  
  
So this prayer  
abandons me  
and becomes itself.

**On Reading a Poem Aloud**

Just the way a poem

explodes

mid-air

particle suspension-

dust, glitter, heart, hair, muscle, trash-

stone’s

throw

from city-centres below, fireworked

kaleidoscopes,

look:

knit kilt disentangling,

this day moving

backwards,

words *embryoning* back to thought,

now an explosion, now an experience

now a reverse globe,

backhanded evolution,

language-thought-memory,

nothingness,

nothingness.

**In Her Temporary Absences, I Now Become My Mother**

Sunlight enters the house like mayflies,

gets trapped

in the web of maternal-time- I ache

to catch that next sunset, but there's always

milk to curdle

in pretty round bowls, and things

to chop, cut, fold, ferment, or slice. Listen:

the grinding whirrs

of a lonely washing machine at odd nights-

its cyclical turns propelling soapy waters

into dancing dervishes: I

now scrub shirt-collars before soaking them,

dice cucumbers into perfectly symmetrical

styles. Cut-thumb

oozes carelessness on kitchen counters,

ancestral foremother DNA on knives;

to mother

is to strike off words from the lexicon

~selfish~ | ~self-love~ | ~personal time~ |

**Afternoon Zero.**

*( 19 days before flying to Edinburgh)*

What do you call this tender obsession

with one city, this lunacy, I wonder as we fly-

me, and this driver in *pista*-green *Salwar* *Kameez*,-

amidst sprouting *Holi* bazaars,

on *Palash*-spilled streets.

A swift turn, an angled gaze:

a sliver of the mosque

from the car window-

mint green,

a lonely, marbled minaret

extending

to the heavens,

overlooking

this city

manifesting

as yellow summer haze.

**Unspectacular**

Along the trails in my

becoming—

between lush forests

whaleback hills, warm sun-on-skin,

heady bluebell mist in

faraway forest covers,

& oystercatchers—

in those mundane, colder,

darker crannies,

time snakes

like a paralysed

vertebrae

*(for what is a tree*

*post-shedding & pre-leafing*

*but a sharp fork*

*cutting into the sky,*

*bearing the weight*

*of its great, grey belly*

*upon its winter self).*

**This Mouth is an Ocean**

This mouth is an ocean

floating on your *tectonicity*,

its water now

swirling

between

two open jaws- a shock of skin,

tissue, raw flesh, and now

it has grown

a lingual muscle that consumes

the bone below the neck: now all teeth,

and *softnesses*, all of language too,

until

all awareness is

subsumed

underwater; all of existence is

a gasping for air.

**Cityscape**

*(For the conversations with the Hyderabadi Uber bike guy from Mehdipatnam to Kakatiya Hills)*

As we zoom past the city lights

etched on our Februaries,

his dialect becomes the city,

chortling at my efforts to

piece this metropolis together

in clumps of disparateness.

I had pared at its essence

with fork and knife,

tried to cut a little piece

to take back home

as a memoir.

‘Oh but you don’t

love cities like that’,

He may have said.

‘They are not for possessing’.

**Shapes of a Clothesline**

This mouth is an Indian balcony

during the months

of *saawan* & *bhaado*: someone

tiptoes across it all day,

at the pretext of drying clothes.