

“Khamrahtuh”¹

inspired by “Khamrat Ul-H’oub” (Sabah Fakhri)

Hail the Prophet! The prick, pray, away!
 Isk’i-ni² the sweet liqueur of love
 From Your sacred river of gold blood.
 Insi-ni³ the dark burden of body
 In your skin of sand Abyssinian.⁴
 Let me kiss Your sinful ring: Onyx
 Of Ambivalence, and sing You of
 Life without love, a dry riverbed
 Of pleasure and alam.⁵
 Emptiness gathers.

I smell His stench sweet every night,
 Of sweat, late cigarette, musk amber⁶
 Of heaven—Sin! resides in His lips
 Of heaven—Sin! in His golden head
 Of heaven—Sin! It’s Him!

¹ khamrah (Ar. noun - *خمرة*): a scent that is both pleasurable and unpleasant, usually associated with the smell of alcohol. Due to this association, the word has developed a negative connotation, relating to sin, lust, and romance. The classical Arabic love song “Khamrat Ul-H’oub” (Ar. - *خمرة الحب*) translates in English to “the sweet stench of love,” which serves as inspiration for this piece. (t)uh (Ar. suffix): denotes male possessive (“h/t” grammatical pronunciation change).

² isk’i (Ar. verb - *اسقى*): (imperative) lit. “irrigate”, as in “feed me”, used as a command to pour the liquid down the person’s throat; connotes extreme thirst. Ni (Ar. suffix): possessive pronoun “me.”

³ insi (Ar. verb - *انس*): (imperative) forget. Ni (Ar. suffix): (see above)

⁴ “skin... ambivalence”: The Prophet Muhammad was said to wear a silver ring with a gemstone facing his palm, a tradition among Muslim men in his honour; the Abyssinian stone on his ring was coloured onyx, said to mix black and white.

⁵ “alam” (Ar. noun - *ألم*): pain.

⁶ “musk amber” (Ar. - *مسك وعنبر*): the scent of Heaven in Islam, said to emanate from everywhere around Muslims as a reward for their faith. Islamic texts assert that genitals become nonessential in the afterlife, so it is said that Muslims produce the scent even in place of bodily excretion.

Sin! “Astaghfirullah...”⁷

I lay awake with Vagrant Companion,
 Too much clarity; awareness closes.
 Inebriate my path with the pull back
 Of smoke from His lips, of silver tongue,
 Red Onyx: smoke bleeds through us, down to
 My soles, still, start down a path of smoke
 And Sand engulfed in shade, figures fade
 In white kisses before even
 The Prophet can bid Them well.

“PEACE BE UPON HIM”

I smell His stench sweet every night,
 Following His scent to the shade, cradled,
 Soothing me in Sin, surrounding me
 in Sand, only to chain me down
 To Vagrant Companion: remind me my lesson.

His lips see through white kisses;
 In a 4am gaze, smoke flutters
 In the shadows, fleeing from His locks
 Of gold; He takes control of my eyes,
 My lips, body, my movements; I can't stay still!
 I have an address.
 But You drove me to part
 In a dry riverbed, tar
 Tears before I could find my caves...
 I hear You still scream when You
 Kneel.

My lover cares not where His path leads,
 Or where the destination will cease.
 His sweet stench engulfs my index,
 And wafts in at inopportune time
 To disrupt my empty everyday.
 Guide my eyes.
 Guide my soul.
 Pray for me, Prophet;

⁷ “astaghfirullah” (Ar. استغفر الله): lit. “I ask for God’s forgiveness;” an islamic prayer recited by Muslims as they go about their day-to-day life, either silently or out loud; used for no reason but to “keep Allah’s name on your tongue,” ie. constantly on the Muslim’s mind (alluding to God’s omnipotent presence). It can also be used in the sight of something appalling, disfigured, unnatural, or blasphemous in terms of an Islamic upbringing.

The guide of nine lovers, in time, eleven, together?
If you think my prayer too pricking,
Then bewail as I kneel in the shade of jasmines.

“Ancient Love Dies Young”

no setup

The rape joke is that This
 Is never original.
 Do you know how This feels,
 When you have your mind stolen?
 Taken from your prayers and placed in
 Their pain on my stomach, aches from His
 Mistakes; too complicated to explain
 When you can't feel your esophagus
 From November rain in training.
 Say “It.” Don't spray This.

Mother once said:
 “You look like a beached whale lying in bed,”
 With worms instead of bone pieces together,
 Brought no threats, a gun instead, to
 Get things straight out of my uterus
 To stranger, of friends gone silent;
 Worms still starving
 For violence against Them.
 I remember my first one,
 Built in Ramadhan
 For futures to follow her lead.
 Tell me to leave before
 I see something too early; where they reign
 In cages, laughing at whales; blubbing vagrant
 Standing at attention, giving them
 What They want now
 With whale carcass
 For the dead to live longer, in fragments.

I don't know where They came from.
 The deep drums bleed “fish in the sea” for her
 But They dug deeper
 To the dunes make Them stay
 In place of providence,
 Tastes like confidence hidden
 Under the skin;
 Scratched thin from sheer coincidence,
 Brings her back, blink, fertile limbs form scars to
 Start again, from scratch, itch,
 I can't go to sleep, Mother.
 Bring me the pill.
 Break This still ache

From made decisions I shouldn't have taken.
This was my mistake.
This was an accident committed by
Images, drowned, still,
Tries to move Their fingers, wipe away
The evidence, still hurts to remember,
To forget This again when it happens
With Vagrant Companion:
Dreams of futures never happening.
"I can't live with or without me."

Desire empties after a while,
The feeling disappears; This appears to
Be normal for Them to experience.
Why did This happen?
We blame you for the darkness.
We blame you for the images.
You're talking about Yourself again,
And you live by alien logic,
So we blame You for the others.

“The Beach”

There's a difference between dust and dirt:
I don't grow, but I meet the wind
And let This crash against my frame,
Changing like the waves, and pulling you back,
In, plugs your nostrils; let me in
The coo of your breath. Lightning pounces
And hides the rain before This meets your face.
You would not choose a clear day.
But I'm full today, in your face,
And I won't let the rain hunt your temples.
I brush against your temples and coat
Your tongue to beg for water,
To receive none; empty today.
But still, me, inside, This stormy deep,
Is the need to know:
 Where are you hiding?
 Why do you go quiet?
 What can I hurt before you leave?
 What have They become?
 And why are You here?

“Come Back”

She sleeps all day. Ta’alay...⁸

Sand skin fades from resting figure

Fails to reach Him again.

Entrails pulled from Heaven for performance.

To act credible,

Just enough for Him to remember.

I feel my skin pull,

Ta’al: tightening at my noose,

Clogging at my throat,

Clawing at my neck,

Corset, wrapped around your neck,

Blush, the flush of blood hides

The fire in your eyes,

From scars to smiles.

I feel my skin frame,

Ripen, a vase, to hide

Or hire any face.

To hide the knife pressed

Against your face.

Mad, in both senses,

And sensual images

Feel like the whirlwinds of thrust, up,

Feel my skin loosening, downhill,

Tills the blood, nails digging in mud,

Hair pulled backwards—breath—in, hands drain,

Tighten from ground to stalk. Ta’al:

Cotton sharp, cruel tenderness,

Caresses my temples,

Hurts, kisses, whispers:

“Arch your back. Pull me in, please.”

Admiring artistry of arabesque, from afar.

From Movement: to and from, back again, rhythm

Of Sin, tethered to Him, locking hips

Rippling skin, flushed, flames shining black Heaven

When eyes meet, past, present, disappears.

They will feel like you when you touched me, smiled,

Ruined my sutures for the third time,

Ripping stitches like virgins, famished for liquid,

Bleeding river rapids from Heaven.

⁸ “ta’alay/ta’al” (Ar. verb f/m - تعال/تعالى): “come.”

Wine pours then, stains our linens without Sin or
 Reason; seeded growth of guilt stricken
 By grief instilled from His white kisses (PBUH)
 Planted in empty dunes, once, twice,
 Then silver moves with the wind
 And asks for forgiveness.

!again up Wake
 .Yourself hurt Don't
 .perform to show a have You
 ,please ,audience An
 ,skull my in cracks For
 them crack and shove To
 for scavenging ,Deeper
 a in up end you ,Carrion
 .on Carry .Cafeteria
 .Ta'al .back Turn

“Awake”

For Heaven’s sake, please help “me” stay:

Blink, Moment, see, feet, tamheed.⁹ Sink out of movement
 Into shivers from for Your selves.
 Cling to Them who ruminate without
 Protection.

Blink, Momentum, caress and move Him.
 The hours move away like I did.
 There’s no silver lining here: out of using strangers As bait
 Time concaves, fails my eyes
 Blind, lowers Them, fall
 Down
 the moving
 well.
 Back again, straight to Hell.

I fear I’ve seen This: Loss, Change, shelter
 In my ways, blames my eyes
 And, lids dry, covers them with spite
 Drains out the Night, once, twice, I
 Tried to remember but it’s moving, lights
 The old ways and I see This.
 I don’t have it.

Where is
 Fire scolds Me when I stray like This.
 Fire keeps Me from sleep in light of what happened?

I see Nothing in my present, something
 About yesterday but never slept,
 Kept This back from Dreams aiding lean images seen
 Sutures aching for future everything.
 I see everything: A shadow on the fall
 Tells my future for miles, climbs out of my
 Mind shattered scalp bone fragments into
 movement and blink.
 Stones, not lament for the dead, sees
 Ink. No. Vagrant Companion. I see You in the shadows
 On my sticks. Did I find This? You look thin now, regardless
 From past to Parasent eyes, blinds on my skies show futures then
 I don’t see. Alheen.¹⁰

I don’t remember. I don’t remember. I don’t remember. I don’t remember. I don’t remember.
 I can sleep when I’m a member.

⁹ “tamheed” (Ar. noun - تمهيد): “preface” or “introduction.”

¹⁰ “alheen” (Ar. noun - الحين): “the now.”

“A Frame That Makes Images Separate From Themselves and Others of Their Kind”

pose for a photograph

His faces, shared in vain across from me in contemplation.
 In sanity contains gravity sinks in prayers
 Dating trees in order of salvation from seeing things in colour,
 In space of myself, defaced limbs, I see colour still
 Of sobriety muddles my mind, steers self-esteem to remove Their past phases
 Of future experience, faces content with Themselves, here:
 Grieve for what you've become, from youth to shunned
 In appearance of historical records sieved of Nothing Themselves
 Cookie cutter ink, writes from somewhere here, inside, allowing texts to
 Still, a fire brings Them down Heaven Up my sheets of gold vinyl
 Stands clearer. Find a mirror.

Allah

Appears from nothing Asks for it every time.
 I see light. Substance. I see style
 Mimicked signs in the sand to lead Them down and snap Their necks, quick, for the picture!
 Look over here first. Nothing in the middle, look here after that.
 Why aren't They the same? Right to left unmade
 This whole text, sustaining
 Their movement around Time, towards the line index. Remember your fingers file nails
 With hospital wires from living Life in the future too much.
 Losing Them forward Why do you hide yourself now? In time, sleep on lies
 Before Allah seeks to fix Them from time still moves numb, forward, staying
 In place of desire stirs contemplation
 From cave dwellings silk-damaged ink dies from fragrance
 In strange land, remembers my name now from the start
 To finish squeezing time together, as long as possible, before he finds them distancing
 Themselves to sit still. This is working for Them in spite of yesterday.
 Dancing with the wind, from silk, liquid Let Them know this is happening then.
 This frame can fix any problem before They arise, droughts inclined to drink water until I see all
 Of Them separate from happiness sits Across from This warden
 Of singing, thought links Their stinging kiss
 Of mortal distance not indifferent To This emptiness
 Of string instruments radio, regulated, looks perfectly like Heaven
 From This angle, seven days to jump, get away from
 Hellfire night raids, five pillars, tenets for the right
 Kind of men, names takes Them chained in perfect steps
 Of kindness reiterate, then for cannon fire citadel:
 Melt This trap. Of past, future, tense.

Images bend distance from long-term, seconds to present fragments.