On My Return from Dhaka (Bangladesh III) *

After those many encounters, that easy intimacy, we are strangers now—
After how many meetings will we be that close again?

When will we again see a spring of unstained green? After how many monsoons will the blood be washed from the branches?

So relentless was the end of love, so heartless—
After the nights of tenderness, the dawns were pitiless, so pitiless.

And so crushed was the heart that though it wished, it found no chance—after the entreaties, after the despair—for us to quarrel once again as old friends.

Faiz, what you’d gone to say, ready to offer everything, even your life—those healing words remained unspoken after all else had been said.

* Revisited after the massacre.