

O City of Lights! (Translation of a poem by Faiz)

By Shadab Zeest Hashmi

Leaf by leaf
dries up this insipid, yellowing noon—
the poison of loneliness
licking walls.
Far into the horizon
rises, falls,
the fog-wave of a dull, hideous ache.

Beyond this fog lives the City of Lights!
O City of lights!
Who can tell which direction your lights choose
to shine in?
On every side is the dark fort of separation.
Everywhere falls tired
the army of desire.

Today my heart is bound in worries
O City of Lights
that my desires may be snuffed by the night-raid!
May your “beloveds” live long! Tell them all
tonight, when they light their lamps,
to keep the flame high.