

Ghazal

By Shadab Zeest Hashmi

Was this not the garden of the crisp acorn and the dusty, bearded oak?
We left paradise because justice was promised on the other side.

There was much wood to collect, so we cut down the oak, the teak,
the olive. The new bridge was burned before we reached the other side.

Who hung the garlands, snatched the rose from the lark's side?
With the sun arrived the moon-filled aubade, night's other side.

Strange how they thought to compensate me with two minutes of silence,
or replace you with pension, I on this side of the war and them, the other side.

Remember the broken sky, the terrible storm, animals tumbling
in the ark? It was a man of faith who carried them to the other side.

If ever there was a wish, it was this: Zeest, may you belong
to the one who knows to cherish you, this side of life and the other side.