

# SARGUZASHT

AALIM AKHTAR

THE ONLY MARK OF DISTINCTION THAT I BELIEVE MY POEMS HAVE, IS A RHYTHM TO THEM. I HAVE ALSO DECIDED TO LAY BARE MY OWN CREATIVE PROCESS. WHEN I WRITE, WHEN POEMS COME TO ME, WHEN THEY DO, IF I AM DRIVING, OR I AM READING OR WRITING, OR EVEN SWIMMING OR SMILING, I MOVE IT IN MY MOUTH, I FEEL IT WITH MY TONGUE. I-DO-A-WHAT-THEY-SAY-IN-HINDI, A 'KOOLAH' OF IT, OF THE VERBS AND THE TENSES AND THE FRAMES AND THE SENSES, AND EVERYTHING. I WAIT ON IT, AND I SIT ON IT, I MEDITATE. LIKE I AM, RIGHT NOW. IT IS NOT DIARRHEA FOR GOD'S SAKE, WORDSWORTH! THIS IS THE SPIRIT I HAVE TRIED TO MAINTAIN IN MY POEMS. EACH POEM WORKS WITH AN IRREGULAR RHYTHM, AND IT ALLOWS THE READER, YOU, THE READER, TO TAKE PLEASURE IN IT, AND NOT STRAIN YOUR CORDS SO MUCH.

# AZMS

I AM,  
AS DESPERATE AS KING LEAR  
TO KEEP MINE THRONE INTACT  
AND SLAY EACH FINGER EVERY HEART  
TO HAVE MY SHARE EXACT.

DESPERATION WHAT PHENOMENON!  
OR IS IT JUST ALL HABITS  
I THE FOX IN RACES HERE  
OF TURTLES AND OF RABBITS

APRIL PASSES NOW,  
AND SUMMER COMES AHEAD  
BUT IF IT TURNS OUT COLD AS WINTER  
WE WILL TAKE WITHOUT A THOUGHT  
OUR MISFORTUNES TO BED.

# I GAVE UP ON RHYTHMS

I GAVE UP ON RHYTHMS  
THEY ARE MINE  
BUT LIKE LUCKNOW  
DELHI, NOW  
AGRA  
HYDERABAD  
FEROZABAD  
FAIZABAD  
PATIALA, AND  
LUDHIANA  
BHOPAL  
MEERUT  
THE SAME OLD RUT  
AND BALIA  
I GAVE IT UP  
AND NOW, POEMS EXIST  
BUT WITHOUT THE RHYTHMS  
RHYTHMS THAT I KNOW  
BUT CAN'T RECALL  
NOT TONIGHT  
THEY SLIP AWAY  
JUST BELOW  
MY MEMORY  
AS IMPRINTS  
FAINT ENOUGH TO BE  
AND  
NOT TO BE  
RHYTHMS  
OF SIMPLE VERSE  
VERSE THAT COMES NATURALLY  
NOW UNBOUNDED  
ORPHANED  
WITHOUT  
A SINGLE PARENT, SO  
WHERE DO RHYTHMS GO  
WHEN YOU GIVE THEM UP?