

# Rediscovering English Ghazal

By Zahhar



*Journeys Into Poetic Forms*

*Volume IV, Series I: Ghazal*

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### **Front Cover**

The front cover art is from a free clipart web site. I do not remember the name of the site. It was originally a very small black and white pixel-drawn picture of a pine tree silhouette. Photoshop 5.0 filters were used to smooth out the pixelation of the original and apply a little shading after increasing the image's resolution substantially.

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<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Journey</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Bonnie</b>	<b>4</b>
Vapors – (ghazal #122)	5
Courses – (ghazal #123)	6
Endurance – (ghazal #121)	7
Nature – (ghazal #120)	8
My Love – (ghazal #125)	9
Reconnected – (ghazal #22)	10
<b>Apparitions</b>	<b>11</b>
Transfigurations – (ghazal #107)	12
Openings – (ghazal #108)	13
Occurrences – (ghazal #109)	14
Vagaries – (ghazal #110)	15
Phrases – (ghazal #112)	16
Connections – (ghazal #114)	17
Manifestation – (ghazal #104)	18
<b>Frames</b>	<b>19</b>
Dancelight – (ghazal #111)	20
Impression – (ghazal #102)	21
Starcast – (ghazal #103)	22
Settlement – (ghazal #101)	23
Journal – (ghazal #113)	24
Disparity – (ghazal #105)	25
<b>Dissent</b>	<b>26</b>
Cloudburst – (ghazal #6)	27
Havoc – (ghazal #106)	28
Forecast – (ghazal #115)	29
Blast – (ghazal #116)	30
Sieges – (ghazal #117)	31
Emaciation – (ghazal #118)	32
Conflicts – (ghazal #119)	33
<b>Closure</b>	<b>34</b>

## Acknowledgements

Some of these ghazals have previously been accepted for publication:

The Ghazal Page (online publication)

<http://www.ghazalpage.net/>

Manifestation (ghazal #104)	18
Cloudburst (ghazal #6)	27
Sieges (ghazal #117)	31

The Muse Apprentice Guild (online publication)

<http://www.muse-apprentice-guild.com/>

Vapors (ghazal #122)	5
Dancelight (ghazal #111)	20
Blast (ghazal #116)	30
Emaciation (ghazal #118)	32

**Note on titles:** A parenthesized portion of each ghazal title contains a numeric indicator. This number simply indicates the order in which the ghazals have been written.

## The Journey

When I began this ghazal journey in September of 2001, I knew next to nothing about poetry. So, I tried to begin the journey with an open mind, knowing I could only gain in knowledge, understanding and insight about poetry as the result of tackling a form so extremely stringent, difficult, and in many ways, alien.

After nearly two years of working with the ghazal, it no longer feels alien to me at all. I have been forced by the constraints of this form to develop a potent understanding and application of English verbal metrics, allowing me to express what I wish to convey using a variety of lyrical methods.

To help me overcome my deficient understanding of verbal metrics and prosodic organization, I took on reading several texts on prosody, classical poetry and translations. Now, I will continue to engage in such reading. The end result has been not only an improvement in my work, but a growing capacity to return to older works and revise them with an ever deepening objective and critical prosodic eye.

With new understanding has often come enormous disappointment, for I would then have to realize and accept just how inferior my methods were that I had spent countless hours employing in the creation of older ghazals and poems. I at this point had the choice of taking such disappointments in stride, cutting my losses and continuing on with my education in poetry, or ceasing progress altogether in fear that my next disappointment would prove too overwhelming for me to bear.

My disappointments are ameliorated only with a growing realization that previous works are never lost. What I learn today and tomorrow can be applied to improving yesterday's and today's work in poetry and prose. Even in preparing this chapbook, I took two older ghazals, *Reconnected (ghazal #22)* and *Cloudburst (ghazal #6)*, and revised them so they would fit in with the more mature ghazals written in the five months preceding this compilation.

This journey has also inspired friendships abroad. As I worked on my ghazals, I would contact people online who lived in Pakistan, Iran and other Middle Eastern countries in hopes to obtain meaningful feedback about the quality of my work as it relates to an English counterpart of a Middle Eastern poetic form. I am deeply grateful for the time and feedback of friends such as Shaheen, who lives in Kuwait, Faryal, who lives in Pakistan, Nayyara, also in Pakistan and Sudè, who lives in Iran. Each of these generous persons has given me hours of time in reading and providing useful feedback about my ghazals.

This ghazal journey has been the single-most fruitful endeavor I have ever embarked upon. It has been the goad to blessing my life with new friends, new understanding and the kindling of a voracious appetite for learning, which can only serve to benefit and improve my quality of life.

## Bonnie

She came from seemingly nowhere and wanted to get to know me simply because she liked something I said about the way leaves wimple and dance in the breeze. I doubt it is coincidence that I took on my first major project in poetry only after she nuzzled her way into my life, touched my heart and opened my mind.

If you ever find inspiration in a single ghazal I have written, then thank her before you thank me because without her tenderness, acceptance, love and inspiration, not one would have been written. In fact, the very first ghazal I wrote was written to her. Two years later, there are well over a hundred of them.

These ghazals are written in honor of who she is, what she has endured, what she means to me and our love for each other.

## Vapors – (ghazal #122)

Gentle fingers scan my spine; tender thoughts revolve in mist;  
Loving glances read my mind; passions, deep, evolve in mist.

Gleaming in the full moon's glow, hedged inside a silver rim,  
Dancing on the high wind's flow, passing clouds involve in mist.

Vapors lift with morning light; golden ripples sheen the lake;  
Warmth replaces failing night; memories dissolve in mist.

Cast upon a spanning haze, rainbow halos ring the sun;  
Grasses ripple in the breeze; shifting winds resolve in mist.

Gaze with me upon this art, endless fading from our sight;  
How can souls be split apart when the two convolve in mist?

Since Zahhar has known your touch, sounds and colors merge and fade;  
Countless trembling dreams, fulfilled, each and all devolve in mist.

## Courses – (ghazal #123)

Now that I've breached the seal of this golden ark with you,  
Horizons fade, and I'm ready to embark with you.

You've gone to mend the broken paths that rise to heaven,  
Yet, when I can, I'll come and stroll through the park with you.

Alone I stumbled in starless places, groping my way;  
Then, sudden my spirit formed a standing spark with you.

In time we fade to nothing like the aimless clouds;  
No doubt, this life can leave an eternal mark with you.

Winds and waters blow and flow in countless whispers;  
Their subtle sounds form into words when I hark with you.

Without you, even nature's beauty is bleak and bare,  
Yet beauty leaps to the view in places stark with you.

Zahhar will walk alone the moonlight path, if he must,  
But longs to share this path that gleams in the dark with you.

## Endurance – (ghazal #121)

If you your passion's fleeting shrill endure,  
This tenderness for you shall still endure.

Cling to that pillar, rising in your heart,  
Love keeps those vaulting halls that will endure.

Storms may rage upon the roof of your soul,  
Yet warming love shall all their chill endure.

This heart keeps refuge in your love's embrace,  
And safe in your fold may every ill endure.

Men seek their thrill on roller-coaster heights,  
But where within can such a thrill endure?

Alone in the night one ponders many thoughts,  
Love is the ink that makes his quill endure.

In time, Zahhar could write a thousand ghazals,  
But how, without you, could his skill endure?

## Nature – (ghazal #120)

Cascading water falls with flowing character  
And in the moon's light gleams with glowing character.

Leaves drift about in the scent of cooling winds;  
Autumn shuffles them off with blowing character.

Ravens at sunset, over a glimmering lake,  
Bid farewell to the day in crowing character.

Seeds shake loose from the boughs of sprawling trees,  
Each after its kind in the peat sowing character.

At dawn a lone monk works in the temple garden,  
His contoured straw hat tilt with bowing character.

Squirrels climb and jump in all their shades of gray,  
Tucking and digging, endlessly stowing character.

Your acorn heart lay nestled in rigid grasses,  
Then came the rains to sprout your growing character.

She touched your life, Zahhar, with her sapling branches;  
Her love has never declined in showing character.

## My Love – (ghazal #125)

In all my days of love and loss, I never once have pined, my love,  
As here I pine beneath the night, longing to know your mind, my love.

Of all the ways these feet have trod, in places bleak and bright, my love,  
The way I favor most to go is where we walk in kind, my love.

In all the airy lands abroad, I never once have found, my love,  
A peace that permeates my soul, as when we rest entwined, my love.

Of all the treasures I have found, of jasper and of jade, my love,  
You are by far the fairest gem, by far my greatest find, my love.

In any clime upon the earth, wherever you may go, my love,  
If you will have me, I will join, however trails may wind, my love.

Of all the pain this heart has known, the thought of losing you, my love,  
Promotes a deeper terror, still, than thoughts of going blind, my love.

Zahhar can only love your heart, that shines like polished gold, my love,  
So patience in this love for you can never fall behind, my love.

## Reconnected – (ghazal #22)

Down far in the sealing earth was stowed a light,  
Till with loving heart she came and glowed a light.

Before his spirit fell beneath the ground,  
Deep in her open heart he sowed a light.

For years, not knowing where his soul was freed,  
In the lone depths of her heart was slowed a light.

She longed to reach him any way she could;  
She knew within they both were owed a light.

Zahhar, from distance, saw them find each other,  
Where love within them finally flowed, a light.

## Apparitions

If all things are but appearance, then perhaps existence itself is merely a smoke-like apparition already dissipating from view. What is the most sensible thing to do? Hold on with both hands tightly gripped to the intangible mist of the moment? All such hands can ever hold is that sensation of something having just slipped away.

Me, I have found that letting go of the evanescent moment allows the emergent liminal moment to hold more meaning and relevance. Each ghazal is a moment in and of itself. Each couplet is a moment transmigrating to the next, sharing only refrain, sound, and metric. Each line is a moment coupled with the moment of its neighboring line.

## Transfigurations – (ghazal #107)

Sprawled across a dusty couch, a fiend shoots dope in silence;  
Lone amidst a warring world—one way to cope in silence.

Underneath the shifting heights, in tempest roar or sunshine,  
Sitting on a rock, a monk expands his scope in silence.

On a hillside, old madrones unfold their hues to heaven;  
Probing roots fan out and weave beneath the slope in silence.

Chanting in cathedral gloom with eyes fixed on the rafters,  
Solemn voices rise and fall as thoughts elope in silence.

Tender faces turn in vain on seeking love or counsel;  
Countless children walk the streets alone to mope in silence.

Shadows phase in depthless dark like phantoms but imagined;  
Lost amid the shifting forms, the spurned ones grope in silence.

Clumsy creatures claw in fear and strike with fangs of venom—  
Shield your heart with care, Zahhar, and hold each hope in silence.

## Openings – (ghazal #108)

Faces fade and lovers share a common glance in the void;  
Sifting through the crowd, they meet, alone to dance in the void.

Falling from the azure depths, at one with wind in the heights,  
Bold skydivers pull the cord and play with chance in the void.

Horses thunder through the fields—look how they race with the clouds!  
Boundless freedom sings where neighs and whinnies prance in the void.

Distant rumbles barely heard in silent depths of the night  
Leave a moonlit trail that gleams a silver lance in the void.

Stark against the setting sun and wild crash of the sea,  
Growing lone, a cypress holds a mighty stance in the void.

Beating midnight wings in time, a raven lights on a branch;  
Soft, a sable feather falls, then floats askance in the void.

Strive each day to wake, Zahhar, and lift the veil from your sight—  
Shifting dreams can only serve to break your trance in the void.

## Occurrences – (ghazal #109)

Ridges slope to meet the waves in gradient appearance;  
Foliage climbs to each lone peak in variant appearance.

Soft the half-moon's halo glows in the subtle haze of night,  
Where undulating ocean foam gleams salient appearance.

Endless in collapse upon its own constant expansion,  
Shedding light, the sun maintains a radiant appearance.

Countless shades of blue reveal within the arching heavens  
Something more felt than seen in all its ambient appearance.

Ten thousand modes of thought assume that life is nowhere else,  
That we alone dream near the rim, a sapient appearance.

Emptiness can only hold the ceaseless apparitions;  
Where would we have, without the void, to orient appearance?

All these forms that seem so real are passing just like thought—  
Zahhar, you too are simply but a transient appearance.

## Vagaries – (ghazal #110)

When the iron knight strode forth and slew the impossible,  
A stone woodsman heaved his axe to hew the impossible.

A billion empty images beseech our attention;  
They compel each heeding mind to chew the impossible.

This endless coming and going has confused my nature,  
Will I ever learn how to see through the impossible?

This crazy talk of jewels and ten thousand precious things  
Is but the talk of madmen who woo the impossible.

Each time I asked a sage for a little understanding,  
I was told that I already knew the impossible.

In ebb and flow for eons on verdant coastal mountains,  
The slow mists formed a haven where grew the impossible.

The few who clearly see with the unmanifested eye,  
Are freed as only that which could view the impossible.

So you have walked in flames, Zahhar, without even burning;  
But, that was nothing; to wake up, do the impossible!

## Phrases – (ghazal #112)

Teens drive past in cars that thump out caustic phrases;  
Nearby, unseen robins chirp out lyric phrases.

Calling from the minaret, a scowling prophet  
Feigns to see with empty words in vatic phrases.

Winding, rippling in the wood and through the meadow,  
Streams converge and weave to town with rustic phrases.

Shattered concrete, fallen bridges, broken towers:  
Ravaged structures heard the call of seismic phrases.

Pooled in valleys, morning mist floats up the canyons—  
Water rising from a lake of magic phrases.

Hiding deep in yellowed fabrics, cracked and tearing,  
Wisdom fades into a scrap of relic phrases.

Bald eccentric maples stand by bony poplars—  
Autumn shadows speak with dark and mystic phrases.

Shielding life, a veil of blue shuts out the heavens,  
Then at night the curtain parts to cosmic phrases.

Call them pearls or gems or beads or what you fancy;  
Irregardless, these are never strophic phrases.

Relax, Zahhar, and just write ghazals till your done;  
Countless thoughts can still be formed in distich phrases.

## Connections – (ghazal #114)

Gracing with an ardent dance, vibrant gyration beguiled;  
Bowed before the curtains close, standing ovation beguiled.

Many sudden sword-like sounds have sliced the Gordian thought,  
Freeing self from tangled grip where firm causation beguiled.

Walled in thorny hedges tall, we wander our guttered grooves,  
Lost within a labyrinth deep, by each creation beguiled.

Virtue is a fostered joy, yielding treasuries of fruits,  
Not a foolish weak-willed thing threats of damnation beguiled.

Mired deep in sewage norms, fervent struggles all in vain,  
Dreams are but phantasmic thoughts hopes of elation beguiled.

People yield to gentle rule, yet the ruler swells with pride;  
Ego grips with iron fist, by meek prostration beguiled.

Shrines and temples each supplant innate doctrines of the soul;  
Faith and terror hunt the flocks promised salvation beguiled.

When, Zahhar, you bend with age, you will yarn of bygone days,  
Freed at last from all the ways dazing sensation beguiled.

## Manifestation – (ghazal #104)

A small parrot shares affection in the mirror,  
Yet it never finds reflection in the mirror.

Can a sightless man see flaws in pigmentation  
Without seeing his complexion in the mirror?

Reaching out to feel the likeness of perception  
Has no way to make connection in the mirror.

It is often said that seek and you shall find it,  
But seek not and find perfection in the mirror.

Darkness passes through the clearness of a window;  
Light refracts a sharp deflection in the mirror.

Why say "Speak!" before the words can find their balance?  
Thought can only show deflection in the mirror.

Can you touch, Zahhar, the figment of your image  
That is but a dim reflection in the mirror?

## Frames

Frames of thought, frames of mind, frames of imagination framed within the discordant concordance of the distich ghazal.

Explored in some of these ghazals are ideas for deviation from the stringent ghazal structure. *Impression* and *Starcast* rotate a portion of the refrain rather than keeping the refrain fixed. While the effect seems rather pleasing, this turned out to be even more restrictive than the ghazal form already is because I used a secondary rhyme for the rotation, which proved too difficult to spend much time exploring. Perhaps if the portion of the refrain rotated were to use just assonance, alliteration, reverse rhyme or consonance instead of a secondary rhyme, this might have freed the expression some from the ghazals' constraints. Something to consider for future work.

*Journal* takes on another idea entirely, replacing rhyme with disyllabic assonance. I found this effect intriguing and plan to spend more time with this principle in the future. Despite the lack of rhyme before each refrain, in this ghazal, there is an effect so similar to rhyme in the accentually consistent assonance that it seems to flow in almost the same fashion as the rhyme-strict ghazal.

## Dancelight – (ghazal #111)

Though countless twirling wonders dance before to bait my heart,  
Her dance splits night asunder—brilliance holds elate my heart.

When first her dark eyes opened, all the bashful heavens blushed;  
The full moon danced out singing, “Let her gaze gyrate my heart!”

I saw her lightly dancing midst a grove of cherry trees,  
Their blossoms rained upon her; scenes as such translate my heart.

A weeping porcelain rose cried, “Once with dancing step she passed;  
She picked me up and kissed me; now what love can sate my heart?”

Her midnight jasmine fragrance dances playful on the wind,  
And drifts across the rooftops on to stimulate my heart.

She walked down by the ocean where the waves danced at her feet,  
The sea said, “Though I fall back, this does not abate my heart.”

One day I heard Zahhar say, “I did not know how to dance,  
And though she tried to teach me, I could not locate my heart.”

## Impression – (ghazal #102)

Those laughing eyes conceal more pain than she should know  
And holds therein more thoughtfulness than we could know.

Dark waters streaked those fair bright cheeks like river's flood;  
Losses have cleft her heart to depths the sea would know.

What dreams have chained her heart to tears and wistful hope  
That she is gripped in yearning need none free could know?

Defiantly her jaw is set against the storm—  
Growing alone on weathered crag, the tree would know.

She shields within a deeply crazed and fractured soul—  
Only those forced in fear to hide or flee could know.

There seemed to glide along her side a haloed guest;  
This spirit is the answer that her plea should know.

She asked Zahhar to write of her as best he may...  
Maybe she guessed another robbed of glee would know.

## Starcast – (ghazal #103)

Brilliant beneath the show of burning stars,  
She slid from out the flow of turning stars.

Lit with a beautiful intelligence,  
Her glance hides deep the throes of churning stars.

One night the stars took notice of her face  
And fell to her a snow of burning stars.

Her love has reached beyond the shores of death  
Where no raised eye would know of turning stars.

She looked with broken heart upon the night,  
And since has spanned a bow of churning stars.

Her spirit, like a fiery lion's mane,  
Warms with the gentle glow of burning stars.

Zahhar has gazed a lifetime on the deep  
And still knows nothing, though, of turning stars.

## Settlement – (ghazal #101)

Where butterflies flutter in passion fraught love,  
The useless collector's net never caught love.

Malice is a net with holes gaping widely;  
Confined in its mesh, you will never spot love.

An abandoned child sought love from a kitten,  
But the kitten died, for that soul could not love.

Hands are endlessly trading gadgets and trinkets,  
But only the hand that stayed empty bought love.

Compassion pools into stillness, like waters;  
Malevolence is bruised because it fought love.

In a false prophet's heart broods bitter malice;  
It must be a heart that was never taught love.

Never mind the prophecies of doom, Zahhar;  
Words maliciously hued have never brought love.

## Journal – (ghazal #113)

Five years close in dirty creamy covers—  
Colors, patterns trapped in dreamy covers.

Long debates brought to a sudden silence,  
No-one knows just what this treaty covers.

Fraught with countless guesses, joys and sorrows—  
Restless pages writhe in seedy covers.

Dimpled, dented, creased and weather beaten,  
Vinyl treasures all it meekly covers.

Scrawled in nearly every known direction,  
Fancies dance beneath the steamy covers.

Etched throughout with cursive, print and doodle,  
Thoughts blow like a wind through the breezy covers.

Put weary eyes to bed, Zahhar, and rest;  
Find that world within your sleepy covers.

## Disparity – (ghazal #105)

Here authentic smiles strive to save of lost souls;  
There predators grinning search, and crave of lost souls.

Here roads wind amongst the trees to peaceful havens;  
There gray zombies grope within their grave of lost souls.

Here the sound of sifting zephyrs joins with birdsong;  
There the milling “saviors” ever rave of lost souls.

Here green meadows pool in silent forest valleys;  
There, encaged in steel, each lives the slave of lost souls.

Here unseen cicadas fill the night with cadence;  
There rumbles a dirge, an endless wave of lost souls.

Here a soft light dreams in countless shades of color;  
There dim chaos rotates round a nave of lost souls.

Here a gentle mist floats up to greet the daylight;  
There Zahhar dismayed deep in the cave of lost souls.

## Dissent

The American invasion, conquest and colonization of Iraq is what has inspired most of the patterns of thought in these ghazals. It is in the general region of Iraq that the ghazal is thought to have been born, so it seemed proper to devote several ghazals to the expression of my feeling and viewpoint about what has transpired during the first two quarters of 2003.

Outside the medium of poetry, I am not likely to express my viewpoint about such issues. It has come to seem rather vain and trite for me to express my piddling opinions about matters so vast in comparison to my insignificant being. When I am asked for my opinion about this war or that conflict, I will normally simply say something like, "Maybe by the time cockroaches evolve to sapience, they will have a disposition more peaceful and benevolent than ours."

## Cloudburst – (ghazal #6)

Behold grim advance of yon broiling clouds!  
Brace well for the impact of coiling clouds.

As rumbling in progress blots out the sky,  
Fear gathers beneath those boiling clouds.

Beware formidable angst gripping cold,  
Foreboding dread moves in moiling clouds.

Faint not at the restless darkness that crowds,  
Shun terrors incited by roiling clouds.

Life prevails despite dark horrors nigh;  
Light shines and heals beyond foiling clouds.

To compassion and understanding keep hold;  
Hearts full of faith withstand soiling clouds.

If all falls beneath tenebrous enshrouds,  
Seize hope, Zahhar, despite toiling clouds.

## Havoc – (ghazal #106)

Why are grown men sighing? Fear is dim by nature.  
Why are children crying? War is grim by nature;

Angry hornets swarming—countless stinging voices;  
Kingdoms manifest a battle hymn by nature.

In this swelling madness, hearts are weighed to breaking;  
Overwhelming sadness runs abrim by nature.

Rains can never cleanse the earth of all our bloodshed,  
Blades and bullets slaying round her rim by nature.

Those who wake from dreaming, like the fading seagull,  
Leave no tracks in parting, flying trim by nature.

Most are lost in chaos, like the flood-tossed salmon,  
Helpless bound to homing where they swim by nature.

Providence though gentle has been known to ravage—  
You will learn, Zahhar, to know her whim by nature.

## Forecast – (ghazal #115)

Dragons terrorize the skies, spouting vicious flames of doom;  
Everywhere their shadows fall signals heartless aims of doom.

On a plastic battle-ground, plastic pieces move to kill;  
Plastic planes and plastic bombs play out plastic games of doom.

Cardboard faces fill the screen and tout for pending victories;  
Twisted stories fill the room, barring all the frames of doom.

Shattered bones and blackened skin fill the maw of gaping graves;  
Who will hear their kinsmen cry amid the raging claims of doom.

Microphones sprout from his chin; there he spouts the holy name;  
God knows nothing of the man who only knows the names of doom.

All Zahhar can know of war—his own taxes pay for bombs  
Blasting homes where children live, so he shares the shames of doom.

## Blast – (ghazal #116)

Misguided angels struck them on their beauteous heights,  
Then rotting frames collapsed in flames from carious heights.

Demons vie for rights to control and destroy the masses,  
Commanding herds to slaughter from their devious heights.

Sheets of fire consume in the name of good intention;  
A rain of steel tears homes apart from dubious heights.

Huddled against fierce wind and cold on the mountain slopes  
Refugees watch their cities burn from various heights.

A wide-eyed child points toward flares and thunderous sounds;  
His blood-caked mother cries beneath the furious heights.

Seekers of emptiness fall into abysmal depths;  
Seekers of fullness fall flailing from hideous heights.

The simple answer stares the world in the face each day;  
Seek neither deep and fetid pits nor glorious heights.

With half the world besieged, Zahhar, by war and famine,  
How did you come to live amid such bounteous heights?

## Sieges – (ghazal #117)

Weathered faces scan the sky and wait for terrorist's attacks;  
All their prayers could not stay opposing interests' attacks.

Hearty loggers seethe with dread beneath a rain of falling spires;  
Deep vexations ache their breasts to think of naturists' attacks.

Sprawling deserts, drying lakes and fertile soils turned to salt  
Bare the brunt of needy hands and clumsy theorists' attacks.

Laughing at sardonic jokes an audience is brought to tears,  
Thus inverted sorrows share the punch of humorists' attacks.

Thrumming fingers tap the desk unheeding of professor talk,  
Eyes are glazed with sultry thoughts that long for amorists' attacks.

Human folly scales the ranks from thief to king, from clown to saint;  
Ample fodder feeds the guns of jarring satirists' attacks.

Ghazals live a thousand years if they are tuned to lyric gait;  
Take the fretful risk, Zahhar, of feeling plagiarists' attacks.

## Emaciation – (ghazal #118)

Long ago, before her depths fed mad conglomerate needs,  
This blood-soaked sand was fertile land that met more moderate needs.

Winds rise up and desert storms destroy ten thousand homes,  
And hungry ghosts feed on decay to glut degenerate needs.

All short-sighted might, the Great Machine consumes the world,  
Proclaiming all the while to meet the world's agglomerate needs.

Liberation brought their bane of plunder, ruin and rape,  
For raging hearts were finally freed to sate intemperate needs.

Crimson streaks of blood now stain the bedding of our hope,  
And fifty bullet holes present the West's adulterate needs.

Time will sweep the cross and crescent both to forgotten dust;  
No-one will remember their strife or their commensurate needs.

Hafiz and Rumi, were they here, might have written the same;  
You are obliged, Zahhar, to plead the rend's confederate needs.

## Conflicts – (ghazal #119)

Enlightened nations strive to finalize the fighting;  
Corrupted countries seek to formalize the fighting.

Our eyes are shocked by sparks that fabricate a tyrant;  
Plantations build machines that specialize the fighting.

In armchair comfort, watch desultory announcements,  
As new and modern methods socialize the fighting.

These stucco walls are filled with countless indentations  
Where urban drive-by shootings normalize the fighting.

In air-conditioned rooms with ornamental index,  
Fat pashas point to maps and analyze the fighting.

We must protect our rights to unfettered consumption;  
Such senseless words are used to moralize the fighting.

There waving on the wind in arrogant defiance,  
The stars and bloody stripes now symbolize the fighting.

Those ancient words of peace are converted for battle;  
Religious reasons rise and catalyze the fighting.

A single life, Zahhar, exemplifying stillness,  
A thousand years from now may neutralize the fighting.

## Closure

This concludes Volume IV of this series. The creation of these four chapbooks has taken me nearly two years of constant effort, which has been very worthwhile to me. Though this is the close of my planned work with the ghazal, inspiration to write ghazals has not diminished. There are 25 ghazals which have not been included in this chapbook collection because I feel they are not of high enough quality. However, I will be spending time with these pieces in hopes of improving them. This mixed with the creation of new ghazals as time and inspiration manifest will eventually lead to at least a fifth volume in this series. But, the main bulk of my work with the ghazal ends here.

Series III, Tercets, will be my next long term endeavor, which will contain no less than five volumes at its close, possibly as many as seven. Series III will explore difficult, though not necessarily unknown, tercet forms. During the project, I will attempt to invent a truly unique tercet form, give it a name, and devote a chapbook of the series to it.

Thank you for taking the time to read this work. I hope that some of the thoughts and expressions herein have been of some meaning to you.

## Thoughts

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## **Contact**

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