

ZEESHAN SAHIL

*Love*

That girl I love who doesn't want  
to read a poem begins a story--  
A story so dark that no one can walk in it.  
Love, which is usually found in such stories,  
is absent.

Side by side, she walks with her favorite character.  
But before she can reach the door  
she stumbles.  
She grasps the walls,  
trying to stand up, and injures her fingers.  
She cries when she finds  
her beautiful nails are broken.

The story is still so dark  
that no one can see her tears.

This girl is not the girl who began the story.  
The girl who began the story is not the girl.

To get the story going  
she stumbles through the poem she had not read.

Step by step she gets to the end of her story.  
She stays in the dark and goes far.  
She moves through the dark and leaves love in the shadow  
in order to finish her story.

*Malika/Queen*

After she retires,  
Malika will design canvass shoes  
and gowns for poor women  
on her computer,  
or perhaps  
open a school  
and never charge the whole fee  
from children  
who have been through  
the burning drum.  
Malika will sell all her houses, cars,  
and pointy brooch at half price.  
Malika will breed rabbits  
and clap with joy  
to see their eyes sparkle at night.