

## 1. Ode to My Fingerless Gloves

These gloves are worn daily  
Sun-soaked blankets;  
the heart of my hands.

Soldier green.  
Woven with the yarn  
of lovers past.  
A soul-warming gift  
when entering my bed  
that first time.

These gloves encase  
my wrists  
to the knuckles  
of my finger tips.  
Cupping my warrior's mission.  
Allowing me to grip  
a pen  
and expel visions,  
furiously.  
To grip  
the glide of freedom wheels.  
Allowing my manicure to crack  
and chip  
And the day to gather under  
finger nails.

These gloves  
open-ended  
help me feel warmth  
and cold.  
The subtle seasons  
of life, pass and fade  
and renew.  
They are my caterpillar claws  
as I cling onto  
the underside of life's leaf  
And sip  
dew.

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## 2. I began Ramazan<sup>1</sup>

I began Ramazan with blood.  
I was waiting for its thickness  
its heat  
its swell  
To coat, clot, stain  
My fingers.

I began Ramazan, one hand on my belly  
needing to redeem my  
child cunt  
by relieving  
Their pain.

I began Ramazan  
A mother.  
Wanting to gather up into me  
All unprotected  
To be for them  
what wasn't for me.

I began Ramazan on a night  
I needed to see the moon  
to know, for sure,  
That I existed.



## 3. I dare you

I dare you  
to grow a fresh heart  
every time you witness  
light seep from stars  
and run  
Into dawn.



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<sup>1</sup>Islamic month of fasting

#### 4. Laughter is...

Laughter is...  
the moment  
you stop  
trying to fit  
your heart into a  
beat  
and let it  
pull down mountains  
and erupt arteries.

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#### 5. This sitting, a portal

I take my pastel musalla<sup>2</sup>  
Match the edge to yours  
Flower arches lifting off into  
Three-dimensional domes

This sitting, a portal  
Feet settled is magic  
Next to you is divine remembrance

Tuck odhni under chin  
Make sure it's secure  
You help me without condescension  
As you always do

This sitting, a portal  
Feet settled is magic  
Next to you is divine remembrance

These days you use a chair  
12 hour shifts serving others  
sucked out calcium from bones  
Both of our hands blossomed with knowledge  
Here is our niyat<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Prayer mat

<sup>3</sup> intention

This sitting, a portal  
Feet settled is magic  
Next to you is divine remembrance

I look over at the musalla cover  
Nani had sewn for me  
And I never use  
Pearl-beaded, gaudy pink  
Crumpled at the bottom of vain dispossession  
Later in Bombay I'd hear of her agile, crafting hands  
Giving, giving, just like you

This sitting, a portal  
Feet settled is magic  
Next to you is divine remembrance

I take my time  
Wanting to pronounce with my new  
Arabic prowess  
We meet at the tahiyyat<sup>4</sup>  
Turning heads at ancestors  
Ghost limbs growing nerves  
In an instant

This sitting, a portal  
Feet settled is magic  
Next to you is divine remembrance

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<sup>4</sup> direct translation: greeting; last prayer of namaaz or salaah