

August 1952

It's still distant, but there are hints of springtime:
some flowers, aching to bloom, have torn open their collars.

In this era of autumn, almost winter, leaves can still be heard:
their dry orchestras play, hidden in corners of the garden.

Night is still where it was, but colors at times take flight,
leaving red feathers of dawn on the sky.

Don't regret our breath's use as air, our blood's as oil --
some lamps at last are burning in the night.

Tilt your cup, don't hesitate! Having given up all,
we don't need wine. We've freed ourselves, made Time irrelevant.

When imprisoned man opens his eyes, cages will dissolve: air, fire,
water, earth -- all have pledged such dawns, such gardens to him.

Your feet bleed, Faiz, something surely will bloom
as you water the desert simply by walking through it.

Translated by Agha Shahid Ali