Evening

The trees are dark ruins of temples, seeking excuses to tremble since who knows whentheir roofs are cracked, their doors lost to ancient winds. And the sky is a priest, saffron marks on his forehead, ashes smeared on his body. He sits by the temples, worn to a shadow, not looking up.

Some terrible magician, hidden behind curtains, has hypnotized Time so this evening is a net in which the twilight is caught. Now darkness will never comeand there will never be morning.

The sky waits for this spell to be broken, for history to tear itself from this net, for Silence to break its chains so that a symphony of conch shells may wake up to the statues and a beautiful, dark goddess, her anklets echoing, may unveil herself.

Translation by Agha Shahid Ali