

## **Be Near Me**

You who demolish me, you whom I love,  
be near me. Remain near me when evening,  
drunk on the blood of skies,  
becomes night, in the other  
a sword sheathed in the diamond of stars.

Be near me when night laments or sings,  
or when it begins to dance,  
its stell-blue anklets ringing with grief.

Be here when longings, long submerged  
in the heart's waters, resurface  
and everyone begins to look:  
Where is the assassin? In whose sleeve  
is hidden the redeeming knife?

And when wine, as it is poured, is the sobbing  
of children whom nothing will console—  
when nothing holds,  
when nothing is:  
at that dark hour when night mourns,  
be near me, my destroyer, my lover me,  
be near me.

*Translation by Agha Shahid Ali*