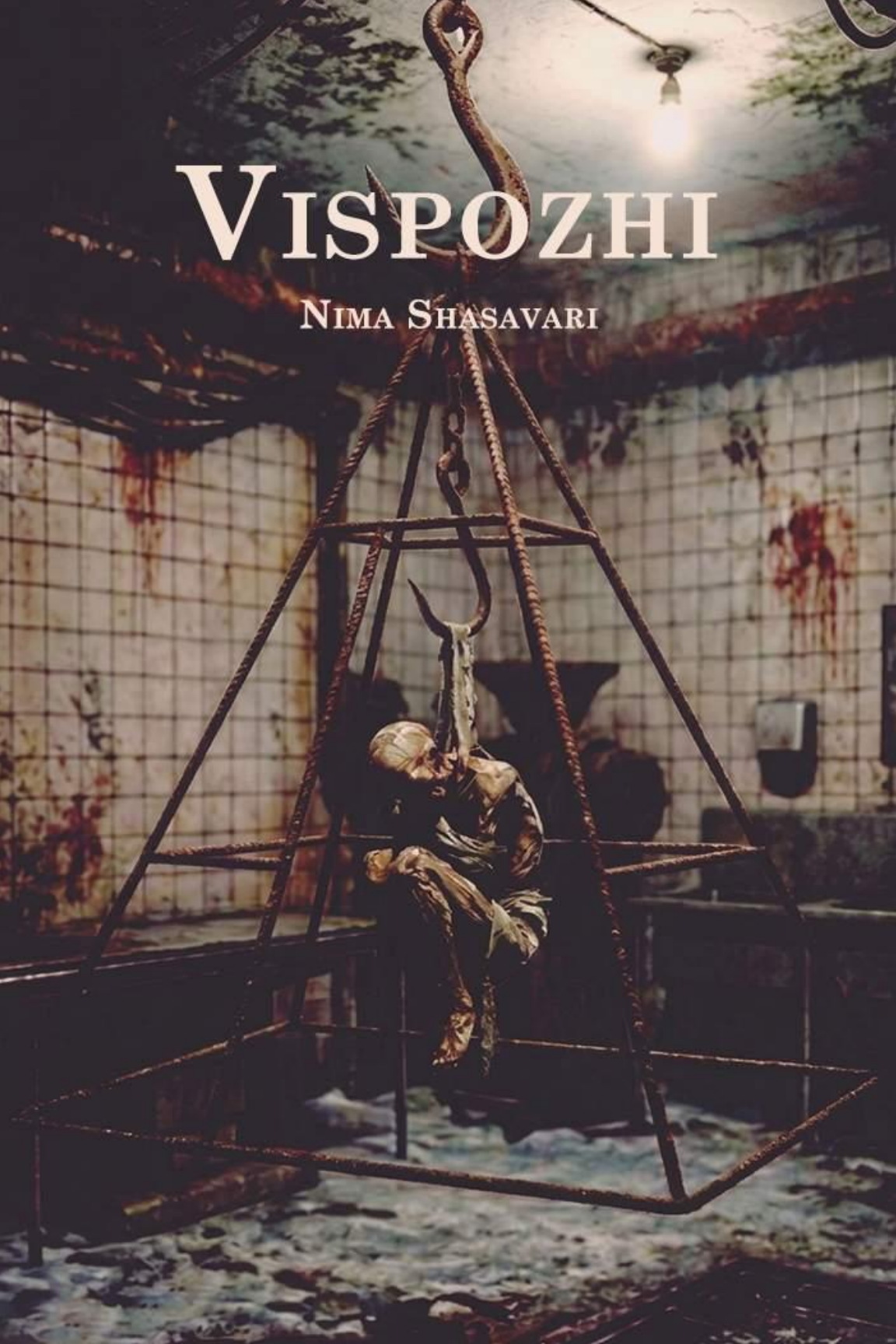

VISPOZHI
NIMA SHASAVARI

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Bibliographic Information

Title	Vispozhy
Author	Nima Shahsavari
Original Language	Persian
Original Publication Year	1405 SH / 2026
English Translation	Translated via AI (Refined & Stylized)
English Edition Year	2026
Publisher / Platform	Open-Access Digital Release (idealistic-world.com)

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A WORD WITH YOU

In the name of Freedom, the sole savior of all living beings, I consider it my duty that the following words appear at the beginning of my books, so that all who encounter them may become aware of this request.

Nima Shahsavari set out to write books so that, through them, he might call some back to themselves, invite others to the path of freedom, awaken awareness in those willing to see, and thereby disseminate his thoughts.

He regarded it as a disgrace to build a trade upon his struggle and to stain that noble struggle with material gain

My purpose and ideal have never been concealed from anyone, nor do they require extensive inquiry to be understood, for I have always spoken plainly and transparently. Yet for those who remain unaware, let it be stated once again.

I rose to stand against the boundless oppressions imposed in the name of God, Allah, Yahweh, Jesus, Man, or any other title under which power has continually been mistaken for purpose and ultimate truth.

I rose to seek the freedom of all living beings.

A freedom eternal in nature, founded upon a single law: respect for all life and the refusal to inflict harm upon other living beings, whether plant, animal, or human.

I would consider it a disgrace to violate this law of liberation in pursuit of that very ideal, freedom itself, and thereby become the cause of suffering for another living being.

With the aid of modern science and technology, it is no longer necessary to follow the path of previous generations, nor to depend upon paper for the dissemination of books. Paper is taken from the noble bodies of beautiful trees and comes at the cost of their lives, contributing to the destruction of nature.

I have never published my writings upon paper, upon the lives of trees. My sole request of publishers is that these works likewise never be printed on paper, whether for profit or for the purpose of promotion and public awareness.
Today, technology offers us the means to stand against the destruction and death of these noble living beings. Therefore, if you regard yourselves as advocates of freedom, you would surely refrain from participating in the killing of nature even without this appeal. And if profit remains your primary concern and you insist upon pursuing this trade, technology still offers a path free from the slaughter and mass destruction of trees, allowing your actions to appear just and worthy of respect in the eyes of myself and other free thinkers.
In the hope of freedom and liberation for all living beings.



NIMA SHAHSAVARI

THE FIRST STRIKE

Trapped within the constriction of concrete walls, inside the throes of an aching body, she convulsed. I saw the shuddering of her limbs; she was breathing in sharp, gasps, and life was slipping to the edge, life in the midst of crystallizing its own self anew. She was passing away from the center once more. The contraction of her body amidst her pelvis—which had plunged into convulsions—wedged her very existence against the fracture of her spine, and I witnessed this entanglement of life at the core of her being. She cried out loud:
Here the air is cold,

the walls are concrete and cement,
walls have assaulted her very soul from every side, and in this soul-freezing cold, she will deliver you forth from the warmth of her womb.
In the dark abyss of her eyes, deep within the arches of her long lashes, I see the freshness of living. She carries a life that waits in her flesh for a cry.
She screamed again, and still it was unavailing.
The contraction within her bodily muscles, the entanglement and parching of her thirst, and the melody of her pelvis planted me deep within myself. With a few more shudders of her thighs, I watched her strain once more—a simultaneous pressure. And now, where is she?
Why is no one beside her?
Her eyes were bloodshot, waiting for a scent that might promise her the presence of another, yet no one is here. But she knows she is being watched.
Eyes amid the cold cement of the wall await her fresh push. I hear the lingering echo of cement fragments in the wall; they form countless lips chanting a hymn, demanding Māl.
Give birth for us, Mother.
Mother pushed once more and closed her eyelids. The intensity of becoming in this heart-rending pain promised a state of being, and now she tumbled forth from her womb.
This is the sound of life that will be seen even within the confines of the cement wall. And Mother turned, searching

for her soul. She purified him with a kiss, whispered a soft murmur into his ear, and inhaled the scent of his body.
Aching Mother pushed again.
It is not over.
She will plant once more, and the seed of life will blossom in her heart yet again. And she pushed once more.
The walls lunged at her, clutching her collar tight, and her infant pressed close against her. Gently, the mother guided the nipple to his mouth and began to suckle. Mother turned her gaze to look at him, blinking softly. Now, by transferring the warmth of her body to the defenseless skin of the child, she would chant a call whose hearing flowed only through that very air, and it would set Mother pushing anew, tasting the emergence of life once more while her nipple remained in the mouth of a child who saw all existence within her. Life, ebbing and flowing between this mother and her child, coursed anew and raged into a storm.
She will send a cry up to the skies once again, and wide cement eyes stare at her.
Strange, Mother has birthed twins.
I heard this call softly, and the walls chanted to the mother:
Mother, give birth, give birth again.
Now Mother exerted the last effort of her being, a push that tore her womb wide open so that the life trapped within this narrow confinement might gush forth—and it has gushed forth.

The second child tumbled near the first, and through the agony of this second push, Mother fainted, her eyes closed. I saw the struggle of her soul trapped beneath her eyelids; they beat hungrily against the sealed wall of her closed eyes. Her soul does not scream aloud; I heard it crying from the hollows of her ears:
This tananeh of being,
I want to see my soul,
I want to breathe in my child,
I want to fold him in my arms,
my lips are thirsty to kiss him.
And now her body had no strength, and Tananeh stared at her, ashamed of itself.
Yes, I am Tananeh,
I am the flesh in the midst, and now in this shame, I see that the bodies of her children lie cold and alone upon the ground, and Mother remains unconscious. The body of the first-born soul still had strength, but the second is frail, small, and feeble. He has little vigor, his life is fading, and the walls—the eyes of the walls—will witness them both.
I see the cement walls emerging from the mortar in the guise of soldiers armed to the teeth, dusting the earth from their bodies, marching toward Mother. The commander steps forward and shouts aloud:
Mother has birthed for us; bring forth the Māl.

The cement soldiers advanced toward the mother who lay unconscious, swept both children under their arms, and carried them away.

The wall crooned a lullaby to put the sleeping mother to rest; they commanded the wind to howl louder and deafen the mother to the world, for after all, the people loathed unseemly spasms. They desired the warmth of the mother's body, and now, in an emergent embrace consumed by the cage of grasping hands, the cries and shrieks of the infants would find no echo against the lullaby and the deafening cement in the mother's ear. The dark, cold room grew silent, and the soldiers departed.

My gaze is fixed upon an umbilical cord that still shivers. He is writhing; he searches for his tananeh, and in the gloom of this room, only his lingering radiance beckons me to him. He slithered, making his way toward Mother—a mother whose ears they filled with cement. He wound his way around her ear, pressed tight against her, and Mother is still unconscious.

In the midst of this soul-destroying darkness, my gaze follows the tracks left by the departing cement soldiers—soldiers who served as the cement Nājez of this wall, surrendering themselves to the hands of deceitful Zāyeq. I see the Zāyeq;

clad in white coats, flushed faces, and clean, shining gloves, they place the children upon steel tables and ready instruments of comprehension.

They laid the first child upon a scale and parted his legs. Then they reached for a stamp, slammed it down upon his body, and tossed him into a bucket so the Nājez could come forward for transport. His fate is sealed by that very stamp, and I, a Nāzer of your world, see that the second child will not even need to be weighed. Even the worst of these Zāyeq will comprehend his frailty and lack of weight, knowing he is no precious Māl.

Yet, bowing to duty, one of the white-robed figures placed him upon the scale, parted his legs, stamped him, and tossed him into the basket, waiting once more for the Nājez to bring them more Māl and for him to register the Māl.

Where will they take the Māl from within the baskets?

Into the depths of which cages will they herd these small and feeble Māl?

They buried him in a lightless cage—he who had no strength, who was undersized and lean. They will bloat him by forcing an artificial teat brimming with powdered milk; they will press the nāsus in their hands, forcing all the flour down his throat so that, amidst the darkness and inflated by an abundance of dry milk, he might form a phantom body—rosy, soft-fleshed. Every time, I see his tananeh motionless inside the box, where he will be crammed, terrified of the

abyss of darkness, curling into himself out of fear, soiling himself until his excrement forms the garment of his body, yearning only for a gentle shudder amidst this agony. But alas for the becoming that this rosiness will demand of him.
His box is cramped,
exceedingly cramped,
leaving him abandoned in total gloom, while hope within him whispers the quiet call of death. I wonder, will his sister's cage be larger?
You know, this ill-fated child is the son of that same mother whose second birth yielded a male Māl, leaving them so lean and frail.
In the end, he does not know if he has a sister or if his brother has been taken away. And there, inside that same cramped cage, I hear a call as he continually envisions his sister: on her journey toward motherhood, they force the nāsus into her mouth, inflating her, fattening her, inspecting her within the cement, and what will they do to her once she is bloated?
He does not know, yet he will remember his mother inside that very same cramped cage—a mother who was his sister, a sister who became his mother, and mothers who were each other's sisters. And now, in that same space, he will also catch a glimpse of his brother, who perhaps was granted a bit more time, perhaps carried away to a nursery built especially for them.

I have seen this cement nursery within this massive block; they built it in a courtyard far removed from these houses, sheltering within its heart brothers and sisters to play together for a brief spell.

I see them—their space is cramped, the air is thin, and they have never laid eyes upon the sun. Yet still they will play together, chase one another, fashioning every inanimate shape into the likeness of a mother and gathering round it. I see these boys and daughters, whom one of the Zāyeq will one day line up, inspecting the stamp upon each of their foreheads right there in the queue. Then he will weigh them upon the scale and yield the Māl.

Upon the forehead or between the parted thighs, the decree of existence—whether amid cement or cord—will be pronounced there. The cord that they looped around my brother's neck, dragging him away. He dragged himself across the earth, flung himself down, but the Nājez who surrounded him pulled him onward, forcing him down into a yawning vault:

We want Māl! We demand our own Māl!

This is the cry of the Nājez, the NĀFEZ, the NĀQEṢ—I know not which, yet the voice reverberates through the lofty atmosphere of this world, and the vault sits waiting to devour my brother. A Nājez awaits him. Long before him, I saw my brother—the very one Mother birthed, the one who was small, devoid of strength, and a boy. I saw him deep within

that tiny cage, soiling himself, his mouth stuffed with wind amidst flour tainted with milk, and ultimately, this body turned rosy from the bloodlessness within him will be led to the chamber of the Nājez who awaits him.
Brothers will be selected from all across this world; their forehead stamps will be checked, all will be weighed upon the scale, and in the end, they will all stand at a height before a cement soldier who wears a faint smile upon his lips and chants a quiet call:
These are ours.
A massive Māl had been slain by him a little while earlier, and he viewed this as his greatest triumph.
After all, none possessed the strength to tame him; they called him a savage,
a resolute man of dark countenance, endowed with muscular sinews and a booming voice. He was the greatest of these Māl.
I know him; I have seen his mate as well.
A short time ago, they lived within their own green realm, until one day their dream transformed into the nightmare of a multitude craving Māl, viewing all as Māl, dragging him with a cord around his neck, dragging him down into an abyss they sealed entirely with a thousand blocks of cement.
He was in the arms of his mate, kissing her, inhaling the scent of her body, when suddenly their guest went mad.

For some time prior, guests had been dispatched to their domain, knocking upon their doors, bearing gifts—sugar it was,
shakkar it was,
salt it was,
wheat it was, and bread it was, I know not what,
yet they brought gifts, and Father welcomed them. Mother drew near, inhaling their scent, and out of respect approached the guests, their bodies touching one another. That was the commencement of their feast—those who usurp the home.
The touch of their first soul's body is the crystallization of a sound that reeked of blood.
Blood plotted in secret within their veins, and on the night when Father held his mate in his arms, he saw the cord around his neck.
His peaceful slumber shattered,
he found himself suffocating. His mate shrieked, and Father watched as they forced her into an iron cage—now iron, too, holds sway. They will subdue them with molten iron cast over fire. In the bewildered eyes of the mother, I witnessed this nightmare a thousandfold as she perpetually asked herself:
Are these things real?
Are these truly the guests?

They threw salt into the mother's eyes, forced all the flour into her mouth to silence her into sleep, and dragged the father once again. Now, from the very bodies of these ones, they will forge daggers; they will carve the bones of the father into a weapon of slaughter, and you will see the sprouting of their bones within the heart of a furnace where life shall be turned into sharp iron.

The father was dragged across the ground, and the earth beneath his feet clung to him, refusing to let him go. Amidst the muscles of his legs, I witnessed the entwining with the earth. They recited poetry to one another; the earth spoke to him of resistance, while the guests grew frantic. Madly, they pulled at the rope—pulling until the father grew faint and his feet no longer touched the ground. The earth tossed itself up and down, striving perhaps to gnaw at the skin of his feet, yet it could not.

And the one who had applied the greatest tension to the tether around the father’s neck now waits inside the room with a smile for a child who is lean and stricken with pain. They have called him the bloated pink one, and they know that the softest Tananeh flesh in the world belongs to him.

I beheld the darkened body of the father right within this very room, where metal had swallowed everything, and the earth was no more, replaced entirely by steel. Beneath all the layers of steel, I heard the weeping moans of the earth and

the soil in this graveyard. Unconscious, the father rose quietly from his place.

He stood before his adversary; they gazed into each other's eyes. Within the father's eyes, a single question echoed unceasingly. He wailed his wife's name, yet he would not permit the usurping guest to hear his voice.

It was amidst this moment that, suddenly, a shorn, polished, and razor-sharp blade of iron descended upon his neck.

A wound was opened, blood gushed forth, yet it availed nothing.

The father was remembering his own self—remembering the bygone days when two massive lungs were pumped toward his thighs from either side, imposing a crushing pressure upon his frame. He gave a violent shudder and collapsed to the ground. His body trembled, twitching uncontrollably, as the hero Nājez, eager to claim his medal, once again raised the sharp iron vessel and struck it upon the father's neck.

The neck was severed a fraction more, twitching once more.

The father gave a few final convulsive quivers, and a stream of blood spurted from his neck. His eyes remained wide open; through his gaze, he beheld the hero Nājez—the one who had slain the most stubborn and savage Māl.

He saw the badge of honor gleaming upon the chest of Nājez, the one who stood as a hero.

Within the sight of my own self, I beheld that pink, slender-limbed child who is now bloated today.

Hero Nājez sought to behead him as well with that very same polished iron held in his hand, but the child pressed his head against his hands.

The warmth that dwells within Tananehs is absolute and one.

The mother, Nājez, Zāyeq, and Wāseq all share that single warmth. Recognizing his mother within this very warmth, the child rubbed his own self against his killer, and the iron-visaged shape of death ascended. Repeatedly, consecutively, it struck down upon necks, until at last it cast to the ground the head of a robust father, a pink-hued and bloodless child, an infant of several months, and a man of several years. Everything spun, staining the steel with blood, and their wide-open eyes looked on once more. The earth, weeping, cries out to them, yet no sound broke free from amidst the cement, the concrete, all the steel, iron, and hardened metal; it consumed everything back into its own self.

Amidst these flowing arteries of steel and metal, I advance house by house to find the father's wife. For in his final gaze—there where his eyes remained wide open and blood had saturated everything—he whispered into my ear:

Seek out my wife.

Even while the world still flickered in his sight, with a tilt of his head, he pointed toward her place.

Following his lead, I shall pass through all these houses one by one and search this morgue. The rooms stood side by

side; within them, cold, massive steel and iron held piles upon piles of corpses.

Corpses that had all been slaughtered; all put to death by the heroes, decapitated and flung out lengthwise. Amongst the rooms, I behold a vast chamber meant for inhaling poison suspended in the air. I see how countless numbers will be driven inside so that they may not tear everyone to shreds, and many of these prisoners of war shall be quietly put down in the silence. These walls have swallowed more prisoners than your heart could desire—prisoners who draw breath in this very atmosphere. They were hunted down, captured, and reduced to the defeated side of the war, and the vanquished were made into slaves. Such is the end of war.

Far off in the distance, I perceive that green realm which once sheltered the guest, only for the guest to lead everyone away into captivity. The first gunshots rang out; sturdy fathers were struck down to the earth, and all were heaped together inside these very refrigerators. Fathers and mothers were dragged into bondage with ropes and brought into the house so that the father might be put to the sword by a hero, and the mother thrust away into the dark interior of a capsule. At the end of this quest, I shall search out those capsules and gaze upon your wife. Yet the sheer multitude of these endless rooms blocks my path.

Enormous halls have been planted so that at the very threshold, they may swallow all the fathers down a corridor

leading into the steel houses. In the heart of these corridors, you shall await the lung-pumps that reduce you to the guest's impulse and tame the wild ones.

Within the heart of the deep vaults of countless houses, countless numbers of the slain shall be piled high. This place teems with Nājezs; striving to earn the title of hero, they yearn for houses of their own. They have risen to claim possession of a chamber, sharpening their daggers ever keener day by day.

They will melt the iron in blazing fire, polish it, and purchase a room for themselves.

Long ages ago, from the heights of a peak, I beheld the green realm of the ancients.

I tasted the day of war and the dawning of madness. The fathers possessed nothing, yet they marched forward with empty hands. They were not civilized; they possessed no civilization whatsoever, and thus it came to be that the civilized usurpers—armed with every weapon, with the means to render fathers and mothers unconscious, killing and hurling bullets—annihilated them all.

I witnessed the raining down of bombs amidst the courtyards of this realm, and in the end, the vanquished were none other than these uncivilized savages, and every last one of them was transformed into slaves and property of the victors.

Now, the victors will herd these multitudes in droves into the interior of this very house, and at the very end of my wanderings, I beheld the capsules—they kept them in a place far removed from this house, right there where the mother was.

What has become of the mother?

Has she regained consciousness?

Does she know what has transpired?

I do not know.

I have lost her house; she was left behind in solitude, yet the capsules are here—vast, elongated capsules wherein scores of mothers have been crammed. They will be bound within a narrow, dark, and cold room, a place where no cry shall ever be heard. And the master—the owner and victor of this war—will shout:

Violate their women, for this is our right!

Now the conquerors have come to conquer the bodies of the women; they will tear them apart with violation and, in the end, impregnate them.

Mother, was your child the fruit of violation, or did you come from the green realm?

I do not see her; I have lost her. Do you know nothing of her? Do you not know where she has gone?

Amidst the multitude of mothers, I behold others who will emerge from the chamber of violation and be kept within

these capsules to bring forth new children, to offer their breasts and be milked within the capsules.
All this māl belongs to us.
Not only the cement soldiers, the cement, the steel and the irons, the Nājezs and the Zāyeqs, but all of them chant this. Those who yearn for ownership chant this incantation and stand in the midst to dominate this world.
In the heart of which capsule lies the mother? They will abandon her to long tubes connected to her breast; they will impregnate her within a confined chamber; they will steal her away into the heart of the cement that laid down its burden.
Where is her child? In the chambers equipped with the nāsus to be made pink, or amidst the nurseries to become a mother and father—I know not, but I must find him. I must be by her side when she rises, opens her eyes, and sees that her children have been stolen away. I must press her close to myself and whisper that Tananeh is beside her.
Her breasts will be bursting; she will yield all the tenderness within her soul for the child stolen from her unto her milk-ducts, and the weight of pain in her nipples will break her strength. Will she surrender her own self to the violators? The violators who carried off her children?
I know not.
I wander through the Bisutun of the fertility's disorder, and I shall roam upon the fiery wing of the disaffected. I shall see it

within the eyes of the fathers—how the cement soldiers, rifles in hand, shifted through the mire and pressed forward.
They have risen to claim more captives and fill the house; they are in the arena for conquest. The sound of gunfire has risen to match the thunder in the sky and the saws in the street; tanks roar, gates open and close, tracks tremble, and inside the small wagons, corpses will be jostled against one another. They shall staple it to the ears, brand it upon the brow, scorch the thighs, and seat the captives in the arena. The gas chambers are prepared; tear asunder the solitary Tananehs, one by one.
She is the pain of tomorrow. Amidst this pain, it is a cry of utter despair; she is left abandoned in this hall of life, caught in the pursuit of desires.
The mother stirred; I saw her. She—whose eyes have now opened, whose breath is black, whose eyes are black, whose voice is black, and whose tears are black. The mother will lick the earth, she will cry out, she will continually utter the name of her child. She has not seen the second one; until now, she has never laid eyes upon him, and now she kisses the footprints left behind and laments. She will roll herself upon the ground, and the sound of an explosion—unleashed by one of the bombers in the adjoining room—will force her to her feet.
It is the agonizing shriek of a husband whose body is being sawed apart, whose flesh is riddled with bullets, who has

been cast into the gas chamber while in the depths of darkness, his wife has been stripped of her sanctity. These are all the māl of the executioners, the māl of the masters, the vanquished, wretched slaves, and flight amidst death is what has been sung to them as the gentle melody of life.
Do you know into whose hearts all the peerless arteries of this mad crypt, this slaughterhouse, have emptied? I traced every vein until at last there stood a wall of tempered steel, behind which drifted the scent of Ashraf's perfume, the scent of a truncated dignity, the scent of lesser majesty and nobility. Beyond the dividing wall of this world, I beheld a world where countless beings rub themselves against its back, sick with the thirst to possess it. I witness the clamor of these countless multitudes; they are the very ones who set the blood coursing through this artery of reverence. All the pumping of this blood springs from the heart of these dolls. Ah, what heavy countenances they bear! Clean, rosy, sculpted faces, heavy eye makeup, long and thick eyelashes, plump and alluring lips, draped in woven silken robes that carve out their flawless figures. These grand Zāyeqs await copulation with the Nājezs, expectant of their own children and the cement soldiers. They summon them, and their recurring proclamation is to be the conqueror in this world. I see the greed gleaming within the sharp teeth of this gathering; I have seen the saliva dripping from upon their tongues onto the ground. With gaping mouths and eyes

dilated with madness, they beg behind the walls to receive their rightful share, and at last, someone shall stand upon the heights to grant them their portion of this existence.
Do you know what they desire?
Look upon the hero Nājez. He climbed upon the dividing wall between them and reached out his hand, tearing soft tissue from the heart of a pink-skinned victim child. He carried off the tenderest part of the tenderest life in their midst, standing as their benefactor.
The heroic conqueror brandished the flesh aloft before the well-dressed crowd and cast it down. The men in suits—while squeezing women by the hips and biting their breasts—climbed upon one another's backs and fell upon each other in a frenzy. Each struck down another over a commodity, an eye, a quarrel, a voice, a garment, throwing them to the earth, until at last one who appeared fairer than the rest, whiter than the others, more devout, more worldly, and more vocal, lifted the morsel of flesh to his mouth and savored it. This is the complete and absolute taste of the world.
He tasted, and within the heart of a thousand tables, a thousand dishes, a thousand flavors, and a thousand worlds, he built and gave to the world a man—a great and immense human being, a sublime and noble creature, this Ashraf al-Anwa' who had no equal; he is the peerlessness of the age.
You know, I grew afraid, lest you, O exalted days-dwellers,

you peerless Ashrafs, in your perfection and your communion, should fall into oblivion of this pain-uttering of ours. Woe and misery, that the sacred precinct of this great species of life in the world should be troubled and darkened by these vile-natured ones. Dust upon our mouths! Do not be anxious; all these slaughters, blood and bloodshed, violations and sufferings, all the infants amid the coin-boxes, cages, and capsules are not of your kind; they were merely māl in the world of Ashraf al-Anwa', and these unpretending soulless ones are nothing. Before your arrogance, your haughtiness, your beauty and perfection, your intellect and smile, even they are nothing. They merely tore apart a handful of māl, and now upon the heights, the hero will cast down meat for his people. Go and reach yourselves behind the gates, for if you arrive late, your dinner will be late, and if you know more, the morsel will slide down harder, and perhaps it will tear the noble throat of your Ashraf—your king, life!

In my world, I beheld the frenzy of your incurable age in the midst of this dire strait of predation, and I know here is the world of Ashraf al-Anwa'. If within the heart of these capsules women were bound in darkness and violated, if their bound udders craved the child's mouth and they snatched it away and abandoned it among the rubber tires, if his father was slaughtered inside a steel-pillared house, and if a rosy-tinted child was stolen from its mother and the

mother wailed all year long—you still demand milk, you still demand meat. Over the walls, among the starched men in silk coats, I saw a woman who was whimpering that yesterday's purchased meat is tough, and the hero will hear this and will command that no longer shall any calf move even for a second, for movement makes the meat tough; and the world of Ashraf al-Anwa', amid the desiring of this great and sublime species, will build yet again. They will build larger houses named the Slaughterhouse of Civilization; the corridors will multiply, they will kill sooner, and they will store more within the cold-rooms. Within this very bloody vault, in the heart of one of the chambers filled with cement, children were alone—forgive me, calf-pups. What do you call them? Pups? Collars? Persons? Heads? I do not know. Several children were there, huddled together, waiting. They know the smell of blood; they recognize terror; they all know it, as the shared essence permeates their survival, and amid this gyring terror, pressing against one another, their sole desire was to find a womb to burrow into. Now that warmth flows among them, they will press themselves together so that their heads sink into one another and they do not see; they think they will not be seen, and Akram, you came. He will laugh. He will burst into laughter at the stupidity of several heads of calves, and in a proclamation he will know that the weak must be slain.

Akram had reached out to dash his mother against the cement walls; he has awakened, he will dash himself against the walls in memory of his children, he will gaze upon life at the hands of death, and every time, amid the proclamation of this great Slaughterhouse of Civilization, I will see a certain one who, like a cold shadow while her black blood streams from her eyes, will gaze upon everyone—upon the Ashraf who is the owner, and the Akram who chose a child and abandoned the others to the terror of tomorrow. And behold, all the children died; the chosen one became meat, and the rest will die over and over until at last they become meat.

THE SECOND STRIKE

Here is the wasteland of the Last Judgment, a short distance away from the Slaughterhouse of Civilization, a desert where they stamped the carcasses of humanity with the seal of Ashraf al-Anwa', and I, wandering within the Tananeh state of human existence, am led forward. In the hand of the Nājez who is a prophet before me, a rope is thrown around my neck, dragging me toward the sky, upon the peak where the Lord waits with the seal in His hand. Come, O apostles of God, come and take this crown in ownership, for I, the king of kings, the Lord of the friendless, have resolved to bestow a crown; and the king, the crown-bestowing king, shouted and dragged Abraham up the peak.

I am that Isaac upon whose body many fleeces have grown; my mother named me Ishmael and kissed my face every time. Through the scent of my body, she made me her own; amid thousands, she recognized the shirt of Joseph, and her blind eyes were healed. The mother is exceedingly white and fat; when her udders were in my mouth, she half-closed her eyes in peace and fixed her gaze upon me, and after drinking milk, she firmly licked my face a few times. And now Abraham has led me by a rope up the mountain. Today is the day of coronation; the sky will throb and God will descend to earth. He commanded that we take the seal upon our foreheads at the price of our own child's blood, and Abraham, having taken me on his shoulder, will carry me to the high summit of the peak where the trial of the kingdom of the Khalifatullah upon the earth takes place. O hairy caliphs, O hairless kings, the constriction of my chest, like the tightness of terror lurking for a cold knife, will grant the seal upon the forehead of this coronation. Strike and fear not, for the decree that we become māl is a heavenly call—a rope that they have bound to my hooves. Truly, was he not supposed to sacrifice his son? Am I the son of Abraham? Where am I, with these ugly hooves and long wool, and where are these strange ones of Akram-face? Yet amid my hooves have grown fingers that belonged to the hands of Isaac.

Both I and Ishmael will utter a sound; do you suppose our voices are different when our throats are cut? For instance, Ishmael sings a Russian song, and woolly Isaac with his black hooves screams? Where among the vowels lies the boundary between our cries? I do not know, but my incarnate self, dwelling in the body of both, saw with a single eye; to look with oneness is to see Him the same, and terror will flare in both tongues. Both hooves and hands will twitch alike at the moment the iron sharpness reaches the neck; both legs will be drawn back, and both will suffer the same pain, and the poignant recitation of verses by the crown-bestowing king will transform the predicament. When the knife tore the throat, what remains? What will spill upon the earth? Isaac, my son, arise; the mother awaits you.

I pressed Ishmael close to my body, and his wool covered my face and I kissed his neck as his blood filled the earth, and Isaac leapt up and down in his mother's embrace. And now that the earth is seething with the boiling blood and the volcano of grounded suffering, the hero Abraham recites a verse—a verse of the glory of the crown-bestowing God of the celestial realms who will purify the eternal name of man. Be attentive, be in the congregation, for here the Ashraf al-Anwa' is the house of the prophets, the successor of the dark-faced Lord upon the earth. Know and be aware that God commanded the sacrifice, and Abraham dragged Isaac upon the earth and bound rope to his hands and feet, and finally,

right where his knife was at his throat, Isaac's hands turned into black hooves, the skin of his body into wool-like fleece, and his voice into the harsh tremor of a throat that had lost its sound, had stripped the call of its root, and only poured outward.

Yet blood—there was blood to your heart's content! The mother of Isaac steeped her tresses in the child's blood, and I saw her white wool turned red as she ran and screamed. She sang the eternal call of this suffering of the ages in a tune whose poetry the Russians made, the English turned into music, the Italians into opera, and I warbled this pain. Did we all sing of a single suffering, and did the play of our sounds curb the world's pain?

The rosy forehead of our master Abraham bears a seal; behold this eternal visage, O lord of the earth, he who now holds the seal upon his forehead for the vanguard of rule, he who is the caliph of this God upon the earth, and he who, with smiling lips, has placed the sacrificial meat of Isaac—I do not know, perhaps Ishmael, and perhaps Hormuz—upon his shoulders and will bring it among the people so that all may dance and rejoice in a great celebration, cry out, play, and abandon my weary, incarnate self to the fire-altar, and leave its charred remains at the foot of the phallus of God. Burnt amidst the play of the congregation, right where I saw Isaac, right where he fell to the ground and his leg was severed, right where he writhed in pain, with vapor in the air,

blood from among my burned tissues—which had remained stunted—will gush forth, and God will laugh that the sacrifice has paid its debt to the sacred station of this sublime one, and still demands sacrifice—this Ashraf al-Anwa', who is the honor, the essence, and the caliph of that God.

I was born amidst the soul-rending, you know?

Tananeh sought the very body of life in the infinite blue of the sea and leaped onto the land, spinning and winging through the sky, until at last there was a day when no species yet dwelt in the midst, only Tananeh was in the midst; no name beyond life held the field, and in those days this self-styled species of today beheld life amidst the scent of wild grapes, brushed its hand against its soft skin, and at the sight of it hungered to consume; it gazed upon the bewitching color of the grapes, upon their peerless uniformity, and drank from the nectar of life which held no blood in the midst. Gently it laid its hand upon the trees that granted life; the melting of the fig in its mouth, the tasting of ripe dates and wild berries stirred its spirit. It ate the leaves, chanted the greenery of life, and possessed no species yet. It saw no supremacy and rose no higher; it did not tear life after life, and Tananeh was tranquil within its own existence, joyful, slow to anger, and was rain. I held it close, embracing it like rams, akin to elephants, water buffaloes, and rhinoceroses, joyfully chanting to them the gentle lullaby of living, yet a voice whispered in their ears, chanted to them endlessly.

Amidst the peace of the sea, a storm was brewing, which fear took by the helm and screamed.
It bound the cry of nocturnal terror to its own agonizing weakness, and by night, in the vast wilderness, it crashed stones together. It struck stone upon stone unceasingly, until at last, on the day it stained my hand crimson with a stone, it conjured fire, and hurled the sharpened stone upon the neck of the first gentle ram beside it—one it had gazed upon so often—and spilling its severed neck's blood upon the earth, the killer grew terrified.
Its heart beat wildly; it had slain one. It grew fearful, plagued by nightmares, continually beholding the vision of the ram, seeing how it had left its Ishmael alone at home, how its Isaac had lost it. It inspected the stone-crushed head of the slain over and over, beheld the spilled blood, and at last fear, in its embrace with ignorance, proclaimed it mighty; and mighty now, it deemed itself wise too, and reaching out, pulled forth the entrails of Isaac’s mother and tasted them.
It tasted foul,
it revolted and it vomited,
yet the wisdom of ignorance chanted over it:
O Ahuramazda of the ages, O noblest of essences;
is this morsel of your bread the filth of the forsaken?
Do you wish to ruminate?
You are the most tar body of the ages,
you are tar-er than all,

be tar, tar-er than everyone!
And it pulled forth the «tar» and worshipped it.
Now «tar» chanted unto it;
«tar» had led it onward, and I saw how at last it cast the mother of Ishmael into the midst of the fire and sat waiting for her to roast; whatever figs it possessed, whatever walnuts it had found, whatever nectar and fruit it held, it showered upon the mother of Ishmael. When she was cooked upon the fire, it drew her to its mouth and bit into her ravenously, hurriedly.
«tar» sang a ballad for it, praised it:
O greatest of lives, O noblest of ages!
«tar» hanging from the sustenance in its grasp, brought forth its crown and placed it upon its head, that age after age, amidst the manifest and the hidden, it might engender unto its ear thousands of the Tartaran, until at last the nominal of its own name should call itself Ashraf al-Anwa'.
Ashraf al-Anwa', writhing from dusk till dawn from the pangs of eating the flesh of Isaac's mother's body, pondered, terrified, and mourned unceasingly, while «tar» sang to it through the night once more.
Did it gaze upon the hands of its child?
Was it ashamed before its eyes?
Did it remember the day its infant's foot was bruised upon the earth,
did it behold the blood upon its foot? I know not.

Yet it had excrement; at last it digested this consumed body of Isaac's mother, departed to a further place, and emptied itself right there, and once more there were questions and repetition. Yet the taringi of this exalted «tar» chanted to it so ceaselessly that every single day it struck down and slaughtered a mother, a father, an Isaac, an Ishmael, and even an Abraham. Now, as I behold it from this further distance, every dawn it shall tear asunder, and at last they shall gaze into each other's eyes and question themselves:
Is this slaughter righteousness?
Is the right to massacre inherent in existence?
Its hem was seized by a child who used to play with the mother of Ishmael,
who held her tight and slept in her embrace at night; it seized its hem one day and beheld pieces of its playmate's flesh being chewed within its father's mouth. Now it, amidst that very stone in the heart of the fire and the midst of the sea's blue, beholds the face of Isaac's mother boiling away, while she brings some figs with her, hands them to it, and chants:
Eat this and pass me by, Ishmael awaits me at home.
It hurled the stone into the midst of the sea, cast all the fire into the blue of the open, and returning once more to the void, defecated and came back. Today, vast ages have passed since this digesting, and I behold a colossal mountain of this Ashraf al-Anwa''s excrement standing in the shadow of their world. I have heard that some pour meat upon it, some

sacrifice and purify it with it, some drape silk robes over it, and the day humanity beheld the first gleaming stone, it sprinkled it atop the hill of its own excrement, and now this vast hill is beautiful.
It has made it beautiful, and near it they tremble with awe at its majesty;
for indeed, in our settlement, it is customary that one day the great hill spoke and chose saints unto itself, it chose its first representative and stamped a seal upon his brow, and now, amidst this high and colossal mountain of humanity, humanity holds the field no longer.
This is the great song that will bear a name in every tongue, he shall make his way to the innermost chambers of his palace and pass into the midden of his own digested remains, one day they shall call its name Arabic and another Hebrew, one day Persian and another Latin, one day celestial and another earthly, one day in thought and anon in deed, at last all speak softly within it, and I beheld the first striker of the stone upon the first dead ram, who with tearful eyes—while his collar was gripped in the hands of a child who had lived long years with the slain ram—stood before the great celestial mountain and, confessing his sin, sought forgiveness.
Then the miracle befell, and I heard the heavenly voice of God:

Know and understand, you are my chosen ones, the lords of the earth and the heavens.
You are Ashraf-e Makhluqāt, the grandest and most noble of life, and the entire universe is a tool for you; eat of what I commanded you and drink not of what I forbade you. In this very midst, the great divine hill spoke privately to this favored one—who later became His first prophet—saying:
You slew that designated ram well, but henceforth rend it not with stone, and first sever its neck veins while chanting My name, and let all the blood pour out from its body; you are my favored servants and must not consume blood.
Now with meticulous obsession amidst this delicate madness, they shall draw out the blood to the very last drop, they shall mention the slaughter with a name and shall murmur incantations before killing, before cooking, during cutting, amid eating, and after digesting as well, and they know that taringi alone befits this radiant folk.
Yet this folk alone is not in the midst; this great fair of human vanity held an endless series within itself, and all possessed excrement, all built a hill and he whose gold was greater gilded it, he whose sacrifices were more numerous animalized it, he whose robes were more abundant silkened it, and the mountains grew ever greater and greater, ascending so high that in the midst of the world of Ashraf al-Anwa' we had thousands of mountains facing one another, mountains that shouted with a resolute voice:

You are not murderers, you are merely servants, servants obedient to this God.

Do you know what they give to slaves for silence? A right that sets them apart from others; for instance, in the human fair, a shopkeeper—so that his child might work harder and bear the burdens sooner—made him the darling of the house and each time declared him superior to his other brothers, and now he follows the father cringing, and in this revolving wheel the hills made human beings dear too, calling their slaves ashraf and commanding them this wretchedness. Wretchedness, giving birth in pain while seeing God's burden upon the peak of the hill, brought forth man, and now with pressure, shall bring forth children once more—from sorrowful maidens to halal-meated beasts of mine—in this plight of the peerless gods who give birth every day and create anew, I hear the burdens of the trembling voice in the throats of Ebrāhim and the Ebrāhims, even perhaps one day from the heart of one of these hills a heroic Nājez too shall read a peerless incantation with a piece of flesh in his hand and fling the flesh amidst the hill into the gaping mouths of the servants who demand more of him.

Behold the robes upon their bodies, growing more resplendent than before, turning the call each day to a fresh hue, voicing a renown, observing a poem; now it is he who rules: the flesh of scaly creatures is halal, hoofed beasts are haram, predators are halal, the hunchbacked are haram.

The virtuous God in the sewer shall savor the first piece of flesh in his mouth and if he likes its taste, shall declare it halal—and alas that the agony of flesh shall begin! Within the bodies of rams I have stuffed the bitter, venomous poison over and over and placed it in the mouth of God, yet sometimes God is content even with the bitterness of taste. Now the great scroll of this peerless hill shall be upon the lintels of all cities, and mortals know full well which opposing life they must slay and tear the victim apart, knowing that there is no murder in the midst; they merely chose their own māl to eat and another's māl to carry away, the māl belongs to them and the choice is theirs.
Before the virtuous lords, was not the owner present in the midst?
His presence went not so far as this bone and did not root itself in this diseased foundation, and now everyone knows and this slaughter will be self-evident.
Slaughter?
Zebh?
Salākhi
and eradication, eating and drinking?
I know not, but I behold the wrangle of these virtuous gods amidst the hills; they have encircled one another in a great arena.
The first god proclaimed:

The eating of scaly animal flesh is haram, this must not be eaten, for its scales are the symbol of the intrinsic impurity of this worthless thing. You, my beautiful taringans, must not defile yourselves and your blessed mouths with this filth.
He had recited this when a more distant virtuous god plucked a scale from between his teeth and shouted:
This is my creation and I proclaim they must be eaten; eat and drink of what I have made halal for you, and trust not these lying gods.
The first hill, vexed, reached for its own belly and drew out the scraps of filth that lay beneath the gold, and then with mighty force hurled it toward the transgressor; yet on its way the dried excrement struck the face of another virtuous god and enraged him.
Now shouting aloud, he has seized a company of swine and hurled them toward the guilty god, crying: Do not eat these haram-meated ones, these must be cast away! He loathes the eating of swine flesh and now hurls the herds of swine toward the gods.
Pigs trudge back and forth and are torn apart, blood gushes from their bodies, and their entrails have spilled upon the faces of other gods. Now in the midst of the square everyone is hurling something at one another; whoever has declared anything as forbidden throws spoiled meats at each other, and I see in the air the bloody flight of countless rams, sheep, cattle, dogs, chickens, crows, wolves, foxes. Their healthy

bodies are torn apart with a violent impact against the ground and time, they explode, their blood has stained the earth. Now each one of these Tananehs in the midst has also collided with the being of one of the Ashraf al-Anwa's, and they will throw themselves in droves into the hands of their righteous god so that he may hurl them, and I have seen the countless projectiles of this kind in the sky. They seat themselves upon large catapults they have newly built, and they will hurl countless numbers of themselves and others so that they strike upon the righteous god ahead and are devoured.

Now for a long while these projectiles have been in motion, and the gods have fallen upon one another; every body in the midst of a peak will shout, Abraham cries out aloud on one of the peaks and everyone thinks this is the voice of that very god, this is the call of that same grand and mighty hill whose torn-at-the-collar cry has now come to the middle. Counterparts to him, countless ones upon the peaks will shout and lament, they will pour life upon each other so much that the blood reaches the bronze of their feet and they drown in it. Those drowned in blood will still reach out and hurl whatever is beside them; they will see the condition of survival in this being-hurled, and in the end perhaps they even hurled themselves—I do not know, but I see the rainfall of life in the sky, I watched the rainfall of blood on the earth. Fully armed soldiers bare their teeth at one another and bash

each other to the ground and shout that you must not drink the blood of the scaled ones, then they will drive a knife into the inner chest of the offender and pull the scales out from his intestines. He now carries the corpse of the offender on his shoulder before a fire made of the savor of his righteous god's name and will burn it, and the god will assure him that he will forgive the offender farther away and, by passing through punishment, will in the end nest him in paradise too, and now everyone in the hustle and bustle of taking more to the heat of punishment and the nest of paradise is tearing apart.

In this bloody square, hills will be collapsing one by one; each will make the earth its sanctuary, and amidst the dried dung of the golden age and much silk and the blood of the corpse and the stickiness and density of viscera, they writhe within themselves. Most will descend to the earth in these whirlpools and become dust until finally someone—the god of Abraham and Moses, I do not know—Ensan-e Akram with graces will stand upon all the hills and raise a shout of triumph that we were in the right and crushed falsehood, and will right become the mediator of the world of Ashraf al-Anwa'? I do not know, but I have seen the crown of Taringi upon their brows and its bruised seal upon their thighs; this victorious throng in the end will bear a seal upon their brow as a sign of authority that in a war of attrition and length

they brought the truth forth from concealment and removed falsehood from the midst.
In this wasteland of eras, in this glaring gathering, the thick smoke of all the sacrifices is in the sky; the victors, as masters of the square, in the end delivered a thousand rams alive to the fire for their god, and he again, while being the sole victor of this field, shouted: "Eating the flesh of rams is halal; eat rams, for my provision is for you." The war-weary god will fall asleep, will pass out, and you will not hear a sound from him, but I heard the lust of speech amidst the slippery sound of his, who smashed the last projectile with the body of his son Ishmael upon the offending god before him and planted the crown of Taringi upon his head. Now that the god has awakened from sleep, he will shake his body to tidy the excrements upon his being, then he will reach out and put on his white silk cloak. He has made a new hat for himself which is made of crystals; this tall horn-like hat that has reached the sky has tiny wrinkles in it, and the risen god in an air that smelled of burnt liver stroked the head of the first human before him and chanted to the throng thus:
"O morsels of my liver,
my dutiful children,
I chose you and you are my superior folk,
you did not disappoint me and stood by me until the last drop of blood,
I remember your valor,

how you surrendered yourselves into my hands,
gave your children into my hands,
and I destroyed the dissolute god with these very projectiles.
Your reward is with God,
He is always with the believers.
I have cooked a food for you, delicious and peerless; in honor of all these eras I have invited you to the feast of my own presence so that you may know God is with you.
I created you from my own being, behold, this essence of mine has incarnated in your body, you are my Tarin in the world, the whole world is a blessing beneath your feet, I created those false gods until all the creeping things of the earth were for your pleasure, and I kept you as My vicegerent on earth and named your kind superior to the world and Ashraf al-Anwa'."
God chanted before His servants, and I witnessed blessings turning into the embrace of mothers: children who became blessings, mothers who became blessings, and fathers who became lords of blessing. I see this cycle amid the mourning of life within their bodies. After rising for His feast, God has spilled countless bloods; He commanded His rulers to go to the four corners of the world and bring back whatever existed, from rams and sheep to cattle, fish, and birds. He slaughtered them all side by side, burying their blood down to the last drop in a pit. Then He soaked their flesh in manifold spices, showered the meats with abundant garlic,

and gave it a day's time. At last, upon a fiery hearth, He skewered the meats that were soft and flavorful, wrapped them in mouthfuls amidst fragrant rice with copious oil, and fed them into the mouths of humans. God walked to and fro to bring fresh wine to their feast, and now, amidst a great table, He watches as everyone consumes the flesh of a body whose very existence a mere moment ago would have been sheer foolishness, ignorance, a jest, a joke, and captivity. Now everyone knows what is halal and who shall decree the forbidden.

Now the mother of Ishmael, Ishmael himself, Isaac, and his mother and sister—who have played with children for years—will be slaughtered right before those very playmates, and together they shall eat of their flesh. Now it hangs upon the wink of a god who called and calls Ishmael halal of body or forbidden of meat. He constantly chants the melody of this Taringi to them, and standing at the apex of this pyramid, He still desires sacrifices. They bring them in droves; on a special day, they will slaughter countless numbers of them together, burn the corpses inside fire-pits, and make their thick smoke an offering to God. They will pave His path with their blood, and from their skin, fleece, and hair they shall weave a cloak for Him that is fairer than gold and ruddier than any silk. Amidst this purification of the eras, upon the spacious royal tables, I saw countless forms of Tananeh turn red, boil in water, and skewered

whole: the complete carcass of a sheep, a slaughtered pig, and a cow forming a grand banquet tray, while the first god with his own hand plucked out the very first eye before him and devoured its juicy, viscous fluid with ravenous appetite. I see kings, court leaders, orchard owners, clan-seekers, men, and herdsmen alike, all consumed by the lust of chewing meat, pulling out the foreleg of a cow roasted in fire and tearing into it with their teeth. There is no blood in the midst; whatever blood existed was drawn from the carcass, and now only flesh remains amidst the fire, having been steeped day after day in the essence of garlic and fragrant leaves, and God cooked it all for them. He wrote down the recipe for all this food for them and wrapped it in a sacred scroll. Every day they will carry this pure scroll in their hands and cook their tomorrow's meal, and God will smile—at last, they will kill what He prescribed in the manner He commanded, cook it in the way He desired, digest it, and in the end make the great idol even greater through this very digestion.

Amidst Tananeh, spices have carried away the rancid smell, and deep within Jananigeh, the Word has carried away the smell of blood. God chants and pronounces the halal;
slaughter in the sleeve of murder,
life in the garb of blessing,
pain in the guise of mercy,

and once more words—soiled, pain-ridden words—have come to cleanse the crime.
Halal that washes the blade,
slaughter that conceals the severance,
sacrifice that turns blood into worship,
blessing that calls flesh sustenance,
sustenance that brings pain to the table,
purification that drowns the cry in water,
abundance that calls butchery a prayer,
mercy that embraces the cutting,
shari'a that makes blood a law,
faith that renders flesh sacred,
worship that draws murder into prostration.
These words have all seated themselves upon the face of murder. Every time the blade slips over a throat, a verse is recited over it; every time a body is torn apart, a prayer is draped over it. And thus, blood is washed in language, pain is buried in words, and flesh sinks deep into the mouth of faith. This is the very inversion: murder in the posture of worship, blood in the chalice of blessing, and flesh upon the table of God.
Eat of this peerless flavor of godhood, for your god is the host of the table.
Amidst this act of purification and drowning in words, I see God begetting God; these beings are building each other. They built one at the dawn of days and rebuild the rest from

it. In this rumination of self within meaning, I have seen the reduplication of man in the guise of God time and time again. The first shot within the aperture of Abraham was repeated a thousand times, leaving hundreds of Isaacs, Ishmaels, and their mothers and fathers grief-stricken. Now the Ishmaels themselves, from their very pain-laden childhood, will seek a method to prove themselves before this god, and violence flows within the very artery of their being. With hands that have witnessed the knife a thousand times and laughed at the severing a thousand times, they will laugh as they cut the throat of a calf that had looked into their eyes. Now the Akrams, the Abtars, and the Ashrafs are all gathered in a square whose stature is short and tall, whose traditions are manifold, repeating the very game that God recited, having become God themselves. Countless gods in their vast square will search for their own sacrifice, strike the sacrifice to the ground, and invoke their own names even as they cut. And God stands in the vast square of the world of Ashraf al-Anwa', while the people shower sacrifices at His feet; they have come to ask their questions of the sacred manifestation of this peerless god, and God awaits them.
"Speak, my dutiful children, what have you in your breasts?"
One of the women in the assembly crept out from the layers upon layers of the dense crowd of men and chanted:
"May I cut out its tongue?"
God thought. In His imagination, He recalled the tongue.

Whose tongue did she mean?
The sacrifice?
The beast of burden?
The butchered flesh?
Her own child?
He did not know, but he did not hesitate, for doubt is the enemy of faith, and he read clearly: "Of course the child is yours; if the man is recalcitrant, take it, this is your right."
As the voice of God fell silent, a stalwart man with a thick, resonant voice shouted:
"O Jewel of High Descent, O Virtuous God, if at the time of slaughter, after cutting, I realize a child is in the mother's womb, what should I do?"
God cleared His throat and said:
"After slaughtering the sacrifice, while you have cast the blessing upon the ground and the mercy of God is with you, you extract the māl from the flesh and slaughter it as well, and the eating of its flesh is also halal, for I have commanded that rams are halal."
God, with peerless power, was answering and silencing countless numbers of them when another of the landowners of the realm of Ashraf al-Anwa' turned and read before God:
"O Highness, O Peerless God, I wish to construct a grand house wherein I may keep countless rams, sheep, and cattle. I wish for us to reach a grand self-sufficiency and be able to offer sacrifices for our master every day; will You grant me

permission for this way? Can I compel them to bear offspring and fatten and slaughter their offspring within the houses? Our hands are open regarding their female nature and reproduction; we are the rulers of their bodies."

God, startled, read:

"Taringi befits you, who art more thoughtful than the others. Yes, my child, it is precisely thus; I granted you the blessing of reason so that you might thus possess the world and make use of this boundless blessing to the utmost of your ability, and it is your shrewdness and sagacity that will build such a house so that through its modalities you may forever sacrifice to your God and satiate the bellies of His servants with His blessing. Go and build your houses, for your civilization is peerless."

Now I see this throng from the heights of a distant peak clothed in the life-consuming bodies of green trees.

I know they have taken the mother of Ishmael; they have imprisoned her in a rigid, cement house. Day and night they cling to her body and strike wounds upon her pain-racked frame, they abandon her, and the mother of Ishmael, with the pain of her child's departure while chanting a wounded melody every day, shall bear Abraham once more; another month she shall have Israfil, and in the end she shall plant Mikail, and in this circular gyre the iteration of man shall continue once more, and in the silence of the ages she shall

sit watching the swallowing of her own existence, while the executioner in a cement robe awaits another birth.
I see the flock of the children of the mother of Ishmael in the hands of a shepherd who held the permission to call life a māl in his loins, and beneath the scorching sun of an unbearable day, while the mother's children were but a month old, he severed their heads all at once, crimsoning the dark earth of the wilderness with their blood. Now their blood is in a boiling and surging of anguish that writhes within the laps of the murderers, and to purify it with a thousand oceans and boundless waters was impossible. The gods poured over it skins and pitchers and abundant groves of water bearing the name of holy water, yet its redness grew only more vivid. Now at the end the murderer-child of the god upon the earth will offer their pain-racked bodies to a god who loves the soft meat of children more than any meat in the world.

THE THIRD STRIKE

In the collision of one of the virtuous God of the world's bombardments with other scoundrels among the gods, a massive trench was dug, reaching down to the depths of the earth. The aforementioned cavity was a blood-colored black hole, and its floor was overtaken by the gelatinous slick of spilled and coagulated blood. You would set foot upon its maw and be swallowed down into its interior, and from the heights of this marsh-like abyss, I saw countless multitudes of people. They were running toward this great hole from all corners of the earth, surging forward, trampling over one another, and hurling themselves toward the gates of this black hole. The first of them fell headlong from the heights,

tumbling and gurgling to the ground, and landed squarely in the sticky pool of blood. Then he saw a robust bull standing on the edge; its entire body was drenched in blood, dripping from head to toe as it rose and stood, while the throngs all around the mouth of the cavity stared at it.

Suddenly, it roared toward the bull, sank its teeth deep into its throat, and shook it repeatedly, but the bull possessed greater strength. The people at the top of the black hole, mesmerized by the sight of the master in their midst, leaped down from the heights into the abyss, tumbling along the blood-soaked pathway to the floor below. Now I see dozens of humans surrounding the aforementioned bull, each one biting into a different part of its flesh. The bull collapsed to the earth, and the bloody pack of humans swarmed around it, every single one sinking their teeth into its living form. The bull writhed and thrashed, and they, with mounting ecstasy, bit down again and tore it apart, blood splashing across their faces as they screamed. I hear the roar of countless Ashraf al-Anwa' at the gate of the black hole, chanting a cadence with the rhythmic pounding of their feet upon the earth.

It is the sound of the Taringi of the ages; crying tar tar, they are tar-ing forth, rolling the song of their own being upon the heights of this slide of madness, and they will reach the ground. Countless figures will emerge from the heart of the viscous, bloody marsh, and each one will see a living body

beside itself—tananeh. The first tooth sank into the thigh of the first sheep, and a multitude swarmed it, devouring it alive. A woman's hands tore apart the entrails of a fish she had pulled from the water. An old man grabbed a calf in a corner and, with a sudden jerk of his hand, snapped its neck. I saw an old woman severing the neck of a newborn lamb with her long fingernails, and human children in this black hole searched everywhere for hens, each child, according to its size, tearing the throat of anything from a chick to a rooster with a single motion. I see young youths surrounding a pig, each wounding its body with sharpness ranging from stone to iron. They slaughter the black bulls as well; whatever breathes is a living, breathing tananeh in the midst, and they will tear everything to pieces with stones, the arrows of fingernails, and the sharp blades of tiny teeth. The rain of blood in the sky, within the black hole, has glued their countless bodies together in this marsh.

This sticky, gelatinous mass is now growing like a tumor upon the body of the earth. Do you see its protruding veins and sinews? It is attacking the earth itself, pressing forward upon the body and soul of its host, and this massive, cancerous mass of the Ashraf al-Anwa' is spinning and will devour the black holes.

Yet I am further away; I see the reality within the delusional world. Wipe the film from your eyes—I know what you see, but reality rests within the eyes of the tananeh body. It is not

the tarineh, but its eyes are the only sight in the world. Behold reality in this gaze, and I will speak of your eyes as well. This is not a black hole; indeed, you do not see. Yes, you do not see this massive cancerous tumor either. Indeed, you do not see the spilled, viscous, marsh-colored blood of the earth in the black hole.

You see the Royal Omnivore Restaurant.

This grand and opulent restaurant, amid its crystal glitter, beneath its majestic chandeliers and its silken carpets, reveals the corpse of the mother of walnuts, polished by the hands of its conquerors and lords. You will taste the fragrance of incense in the air, and there is no scent of blood in the midst.

I know; as I gaze into this immense black hole, what is it that you see?

I see the carved golden columns, I see the spacious chairs, I see the intricately carved tables, I see the large silken napkins. I see a beautiful, spinning globe held in the hands of a handsome man in a black suit whose black tie gleams. I see the short skirts of women that, when the mutton is served, expose a layer of their buttocks to the onlookers, and amidst the shimmer of sensual feeling, they will sink their teeth into the thigh of the sheep and the serving woman.

Now, within this omnivore restaurant, no one will bite into meat smeared with blood upon the floor. Today, men and women in fine attire and heavy makeup will sit while

servants pull back their chairs, and with silver knives and forks, they will quietly savor a morsel of meat beneath their teeth and upon their tongues, smiling at one another. Perhaps, even as they devour the flesh of a female sheep, they will deliver a speech regarding rights and the reproductive choice of a woman in distant lands. They eat, and amidst their speeches, they will read of her light, of the right to abortion for women in a distant geography, and at last, they will call the server and order the roast of a ewe whose meat has been cooked to absolute tenderness, and with their fork in its thigh, they will turn the pages of the holy book of womanhood once again.

Now that your hands are deep within my body, now that you have beheld the world in a tananeh-like manner, come let us travel further away together and begin anew from the heart of the wilderness. Let us return once more to the days when the virtuous God, amidst His great mountain, granted the license of creation, and tools in the hands of man became the saint of his capability. He lifted the crown of Taringi from his staff and turned the tool into a staff of standing. Now it is he who hands down fears amid helplessness into the capable hands of creation.

Now he is the one who will see all of life through this staff. Holding the staff in hand, he has set out to chastise the world, to exact retribution from the world for all his fears. He knows that he is the wisest of the world; this omniscient

being of the universe will possess almighty power, and he will see all capability within that very staff which he once carved from the bone of one of the victims and shaped with a stone. I saw him—he no longer had the heart to hunt, nor did he possess the patience to run every day. Now he pondered more, placed the staff before him, and worshipped it.

I see his continuous kisses upon this decayed bone of the victim every day; with his ardent kisses, he will search the entire world along this very path, and now he will erect the slaughterhouse of civilization

He reached out and fell upon the earth with all the irons, cements, steels, and mortars. He dug the earth, scratched it, wounded it, and plunged deeper into its core. Driving every rod into its flesh, he built his massive structure of iron in the soil and cement in the heavens. This grand idol of human existence, forged by hammering upon the earth with the staff in his hand, is the slaughterhouse of civilization

Come, let us look inside together.

On the very first day, from the heart of this same slaughterhouse, I read to you of it: the cubicles, the piggy banks, the capsules, the pink flesh of newborns, the mothers, and the dark room for violations, the hooking up of breast pumps and suckings, the gas room, the electric shock, and the mortars.

It was from the heart of this slaughterhouse chamber, amid its cold steel, that I saw the slaughter of flocks upon flocks of

lives, and intertwined bodies hanging from hooks. I saw the coldness of human hands that had now become a staff—seeing everything as a staff, and viewing the earth no longer as a sphere, but as a stretched staff. Now, day by day, he will stray further from the temples of yesterday; now he will leave the virtuous God to his own devices and carry his excrement to yet another shore, fashioning a new god. This time, he will shape its likeness into a staff and command that whoever possesses excrement shall hang it like a staff and plant it along the flanks of his newly fashioned idol in distant borders, and they plant it. They will build this new structure; I have seen the new advance of this great idol. The virtuous God of yesterday will no longer have the power to respond to this volume of Taringi.

Helpless and sorrowful, He will gaze upon this newly donned garment of man. He, too, does not know what these beings are, who they are, how far they will go, and to what lengths this craving and lust for wanting and possessing will pry. Now He looks upon them, crying out incessantly, but His voice has grown fainter and shorter. A crowd surrounds Him, offering sacrifices to Him day and night, shouting His name with trumpets and horns. This is merely a trumpet and a horn, and against that massive tide of surging toward Taringi and the lust for possession, it is nothing—it is merely an image, and I see man's great staff in the heart of the earth, growing larger and larger.

Man is giving birth; he gives birth incessantly and will multiply. Now, in the course of this simultaneous rebirth, he gave birth so abundantly that the face of the earth changed color, and this very massive tumor consumed every corner of it. You know that the rolling of this vast mass of the human tumor upon the earth will make it larger every day and open wider mouths. Now, day by day, multitudes swarm over one another like the breeding of ticks, prostrating themselves before the new structure of the Ashraf al-Anwa'.

The golden staff of man, with its open mouth, awaits the soft meat (gosht-e narm) of children.

I hear the voice of Abraham upon one of these newly fashioned staff-like structures. He will no longer pretend to reside within the palace of God; instead, he will call out from the outer balcony and issue commands. Upon the wings of this new god forged by human hands, he will sing his song once more and set the wheels spinning at his command.

Have you beheld this massive structure thus far?

The slaughterhouse of civilization

Its walls are of cold iron, its roof of smoke and vapor, and its floor is filled with dried blood. This structure has no peer among others; it is incomparable and unique—a factory with endless mouths. Within it, wheels turn, blades descend without pause, and countless bodies glide along conveyor belts, plunging into massive cold storage rooms.

Now, the victim is termed production, ritual is deemed industry, and the words are inscribed upon its portal:
Choice meat,
Waste,
Contamination,
Standard, and
The instrument of reclamation.
The slaughterhouse of civilization is a structure standing upon columns of blood, upon roofs of smoke, upon cold walls of steel and metal. You gazed upon its interior, you honor its iron, and day and night people seek to smear themselves against its apertures, glorying in this creation and exalting it. And the master of this Ashraf al-Anwa', with his golden staff, stands atop this structure; he will command the wheels to open wider mouths, to devour choicer meat (gosht-e narm). This structure grows larger every day, opening more mouths each day, and devouring the world deeper into itself every day.
The slaughterhouse of civilization is man's new palace;
The palace of blood, the palace of smoke, the palace of blades. And I hear the voice of Abraham amid these wheels, issuing the command of sacrifice from atop this factory of death.
The virtuous God laments Abraham's departure. For several days He spoke to no one and sat withdrawn within Himself; He witnessed His own isolation with His own eyes, and in

exchange for all His failures, He finally reached out and hurled a few pigs toward the slaughterhouse of civilization and man's staff-like structure. But along the way, the pigs burst, and their pulverized carcasses did not even reach the earth. The vengeful, rancorous God, with all the malice harbored in His breast, reached out and hurled a piece of His own flesh toward them, but it lacked the strength to reach their being. God screamed incessantly:

I granted you the license to creation,
Whatever you possess stems from My being,
I created you.

I see the great and new creator amidst the golden staff of this vast tower, which is no longer that distant tower; it has transformed into a massive machine—a body of iron, with walls like hard armor, with an open mouth that incessantly devours, with ash-gray eyes whose light pours upon the earth like a lifeless lamp.

This structure is like a rolling monster, creeping upon the earth, with heavy treads that tear the soil, with pipes spewing forth its breath, with a sound that echoes through the ears like a continuous roar. Within it, wheels turn, blades descend, and bodies in endless rows glide over iron belts, plunging into the cold mouth of steel. Now the transmutation of this god is the rebirth of the human meaning—a human who, facing the great machine, will

possess the power to create countless beings, laying a fresh egg every day.

I see this spacious tower in the distant corners of the world, scattering seeds and planting upon the earth with a compressive force. It plants; countless slaughterhouses of civilization whose architecture it has spawned, spewing forth the essence of its seed into every corner and planting a new restaurant:

The Royal Omnivore Restaurant, which is a chain—a chain that will establish branches everywhere, perhaps changing its name on a signboard from royal to administrative, occasionally cooperative, someday labor, and ultimately freight, but it will be everywhere, and God will give birth to it.

This grand and immense machine is printing papers by means of which it will celebrate its ownership. It will advance, it will behold the open mouths of its own creations. Now it will place all golden inanimate objects into the hands of the slaughterhouse of civilization to kill more, to tear more, and to package better. It will procure morsels of meat for all these open mouths.

Amidst the slaughterhouse of civilization, in the heart of all blood, deaths, and intestines, all the livestock left upon the ground—in the end, within your dish, you will see a piece that has been washed, cut, and prepared many times over. They will stretch a thin cellophane over it and stamp upon it

the joyful image of a bull rejoicing in its own slaughter. They will even transmit a saying from Him that all the bulls of the world rejoice to be consumed by the blessed mouth of the Ashraf al-Anwa'.

You know, they say it is the greatest wish of all animals to one day become food for the human mouth. They say lions have grieved for years over this unconsumed state, for they remember well how man used to sit waiting in distant lands until, after the lions had eaten their fill and abandoned their prey, after the hyenas arrived and ate the leftovers, if anything remained, man would lick it up—and now they weep, asking why these supreme beings do not deign to eat us.

Now upon large meat-transport trucks, I see images of lions looking into the camera with tearful eyes, pleading: "In the name of the great staff in your hands, in the name of your peerless, virtuous God, eat us too!" I see images of sheep that are joyful, giggling, sitting atop dairy buckets while cows offer their milk, a fowl plucking itself and seating its bare body upon a plate, its severed head smiling from afar.

You do not know what pleasure it is, you merciless ones, to be consumed within the noble mouth of the Ashraf al-Anwa'. And I have seen the daily tongue-poking of pigs toward the countless throngs of tigers.

On the day the virtuous God declared dog meat impure, all the dogs of the world donned black garments and howled

every day for six months, cursing themselves. And I still see joyful, cartoonish images broadcasting on magic boxes from morning till night for the audience, where all animals in long, continuous rows chant together:
"In the name of the greatness of the Ashraf al-Anwa', eat us too, O supreme beings!"
Ah, you have laughed; you are joyful and happy. I shall sew your lips together! I have a needle and thread, the very one with which you sewed my mother after filling her belly with plums and walnuts, with wild berries and deer, and consigned her to a chest of fire. Come, let us go and see how they offer stacks of gold to keep the price of meat low, while instead selling all plants at exorbitant prices. They pour meat into everything in the midst, plant seeds, and supply milk, driving everyone through malice, through the ancient faith, toward the sting of death. After all, the monster of Taringi chants to this great crowd:
"Your food is the same as these quadrupeds?
You wish to ruminate?
You eat grass?"
You know he eats grass; he is bound day and night in a narrow cage from morning till evening, without the strength to move. His ears hear the sound of the chainsaw every day; the animals howl, the sound of their laments shaking the pain-wracked roof of the slaughterhouse of civilization. He wakes up every day to these very sounds inside his coffin; his

limbs are numb, he cannot move, his excrement spills upon his own body, and he urinates right there.

Now he will hear the sound of a lever being raised once more; he will howl again. Today he is six months old, and in these six months he has died over a hundred times. A hundred times they have hanged him; in his mind, over a hundred times he has thrashed at the sound of the chainsaw, died a death of howling, and his experience of death and the moment of its occurrence is a hundredfold.

He has not seen the light. Not only he, but more than he, most of them have never seen the light. They have not moved, for movement dries the flesh, hardens it, and our supreme world, our nobles, loathe hardened meat. The mother of God took a morsel from the body of the one who did not stir for six months, and his meat grew soft.

Is it soft?

Is it small?

Is it a body?

Is it blood?

Is it life?

Eat.

Bon appétit to you; this is the morsel of the mother of God for you.

The tissues of its body are full of antibiotics; they inflated it with hormones, inflated it so much that its weight would increase, and the virtuous God constantly chants over this

creation of His: "You are the acumen of the ages, O you with reckless politics."
Now he will sew whatever he has in hand onto their bodies, and I shall picture for you the sieve-like body of theirs: the slithering of worms within its flesh, microbes, cells, parasites, ransom-offerings, and all devourings. In its head it carries a tumor formed from the accumulation of countless hormones, which must keep it calmer and more docile and render its flesh softer. Is its flesh soft?
Eat it; bon appétit.
You know?
You do not know.
You have seen?
You have not seen.
After all, they build this great and immense slaughterhouse of civilization further away, in a more distant cellar and amid a waterless desert. In the most secret and hidden places, they will construct the edifice of civilization, with no windows on all its walls, no sound remaining, and nothing for you to see.
Meaning they fear that you, the pure ones, will see and be terrified?
Meaning they have staked their calculations on your conscience?
I do not know, but it is dark, it is cold, there is no sound, and it is death. In the midst of these very houses I began a prophethood; I wove their cries into the translation of my

own existential pain, and now my structure rests solely upon the prohibition of zār.

Do you know what zār is?

It is torment (āzār), it is the faculty of will, it is the lust for repetition of the ruthless man, and torment holds the middle ground.

Come, let us press forward toward zār, toward the surface that held countless children within its embrace.

These are children; they are terrified, they play, they search for their mother. Yes, the Ashraf al-Anwa', equivalent to your children, are children; there is not much difference between them. Even that vainglorious walnut of yours is identical between both of them—identical in those days. Both search for a mother's embrace, roam about seeking to swallow a morsel for survival, and the momentum began to spin across the surface.

In the midst, the sound of their simultaneous chitter-chatter will separate a group: a hand with a glove will step forward, toss a child into a basket, search again, and fill the basket higher. Now inside their basket there are more than a hundred children. He will place them all upon a conveyor belt, and the agent of execution will pour them into a funnel—a funnel leading to a gateway which, perhaps before their entrance, was called a game, perhaps viewed like a slide, akin to the day a chick slipped down its mother hen's wing and tumbled to the ground, and now it slipped down

the funnel, and the great industrial meat grinder extruded a paste from it that perhaps you, too, ate?
Is its flesh soft?
Does it even have flesh?
Do you eat them?
I hear someone reading in the distance: "These are production waste," and every day they will consign this waste to that very funnel.
Now that you are in the hall of the Royal Omnivore Restaurant, read the menu well; everything will be served here, from the paste of newborns' souls in the meat grinder, to the severed fins of sharks abandoned in the water and embryos boiled in water. Here everything is for eating; scan the menu well and choose the soft flesh, for after all the Ashraf al-Anwa' loves soft flesh. And beware of straying from this uniformity, for the nobles are terrified of deviation and will add all the distant ones to their food menu.
Now, amid the silk-sheened robes, in the heart of those matchless, clean-shaven faces, words will become words once more, will be chanted once more, and flavor will run riot in the midst, will drag itself across tongues and settle upon masks. Now he is the one reigning supreme in the midst; today countless agents, scientists, and the depraved will sit in a circle and pass the hand of purity over man, each fashioning a thousand melodies for you. They are the troubadours of Taringi in the arena, and you will remember

nothing of the blood in the midst, of someone's severed head, of a newborn at the portal. They will sing to you so much that you will drunkenly devour and demand more newborns.
He will chant aloud: "Bring me a bowl of Malchino soup with plenty of Harazil sauce," and I will tell you that the soup contains embryos, and the sauce upon it is cooked with the crushed bones of newborn fowls.
Eat it.
Bon appétit, is it soft?
He was eating this very soup when he shouted and roared: "We must defend the rightful rights of man, we must afflict mankind with this ease of the ages," and he filled his mouth with soup once again and will order more. Now everyone will scan the menus until they hear that a new item has been added to the menu that is perhaps softer and more delicious.
It was in the midst of this restaurant that suddenly a body—whom the watchers named Nāzer—thrust itself among the crowd of Nājez and Zāyeq.
He was ragged, or they made him ragged; he was mad, or they made him mad. But the moment he opened his mouth and spoke, the crowd all laughed together:
"O people, you are consuming pain!"
The people reached out and hurled chunks of their own flesh from their plates at his face, and everyone heaped curses upon him.
Then the soup-eating man stood up and shouted:

"You base, spineless, filth of the Ashraf al-Anwa', we are not like the ancients! We do not cause these animals pain; they reside within our womb, and our slaughter is humane!"
And I have been slaughtered. Once they slaughtered me humanely, and the Akram al-Anwa' bound me in a dark confinement to both sides, making me captive. I had never seen the color of the sun when suddenly two large bulges struck my body from either side; a direct electric current coursed from my body into my brain, and I shook violently, bounced up and down, and finally fell to the ground. I was awake within my rigid, stony carcass; I saw the world, but I lacked the strength to move a single limb. My mouth would not twitch; I was softer than ever, and the executioner—the cement soldier—approached above my head and brought the blade close. He cut slowly, slowly, and I felt the cutting with all my senses.
I simply did not move and stayed in place; I lacked even the strength to scream, and he cut slowly, continuing until the very end when my head dropped to the ground, and even then, I was alive.
For a few seconds I saw everything; pain flared everywhere within me, and right there in the restaurant, they were eating my flesh.
Is it delicious?
This is the grave of my pain.
Eat, it will be soft.

Eat, bon appétit.

May your mercy endure, O earthly supreme beings.

Now that you have me gently beneath your teeth, come, let us grow smaller, let us venture further, and let me recite a tale for you. Look around yourselves: within a pain-wracked midst, how many like me were consigned to the current on a certain day? How many tananeh beings were pressed into the machine, how many other lives were surrendered to the butcher and the executioner, and how many veins were severed? Conversely, how many of us had our blood emptied to the very last drop, and how many times have they heard the sound of wailing? Do you see the stamps upon our skin? This number belongs to you—to those who hold everything in their grasp amid the slaughterhouse of civilization. Here, gas chambers are erected; they shove us inside, not because of our breed, but this time solely to serve as the arena for the existential appetite of Taringi. It is he who commands and will release multitudes into the gases; it is he who will stamp his seal upon our bodies.

Indeed, did they not also eat your children? Did they not kill them, send them to the meat grinder, and keep them tender at a single day of age? Throughout the entire history of this eternal bellicosity of the Ashraf al-Anwa', how many beings have you killed? Does it amount to a single year of our slaughter?

Now the mother of all your tananeh-eaters is in your mouths, residing through long, death-tainted years within your homeland. Behold these vast camps that, across all ages, cast a rope around our necks and pulled the iron, lashed us until our feet withered in the snow and we collapsed to the earth, perishing in heat, blood, and pus, only to pull once more. And man is unendurable; he continues, from afar to eternity, from the lash to lightning-bolt thunders, from knives to scimitars, from saws to the hooves in the roots. He will continue and drag flocks upon flocks back to the earth. Come, let us string together a scroll of this longing: how many beings must write, how many tons of books does it require, to the point where you will hear the burning sorrow of each and every one of them, and where will its endless head vanish inside you?

Eat, is it delicious?

Is it soft?

Bon appétit.

Within the world of the Ashraf al-Anwa', people live within a vast grave. They are abandoned in the soil to drive life forward inside this lifelessness, and amidst the great collective grave of the lower strata, I have seen the many lofty ones. In the heart of this grave, they fall upon one another, beating each other's heads and faces to reach the top and the bottom. Yet come, place your hand in mine so that in this collective death I may dispatch you to play within

a city in search of things—a place where a great tunnel has been built so that the nobles may sit together and advance along this rail, at times terrified, at times joyful.

I was beside them when our journey began; the whistle of the train froze everyone in their places, and with a great clatter and thud, the train entered its tunnel. It carries us to behold the world of the Ashraf al-Anwa', and their bustling bazaar was open—a grand and immense market where multitudes of living souls were held in chains. I see countless chickens and ducks suspended by their feet, being dragged this way and that. It was in the heart of many such markets that the crowd would choose their sacrifice, and right there the cement soldier would sever its head, placing it inside a bucket to let it give up its ghost and twitch, and once its blood had drained, he would place it in a plastic bag and hand it to the buyer.

In the heart of this market, I saw countless chained pigs, sheep, and goats that would be slaughtered at the buyers' gesture. Further off, there it was again: man's beautiful staff in the midst, so that you might see the beautiful cellophane and stylish packaging of those very creatures. And station by station, with the train's accelerating speed, it reached its next home.

Here is that very bustling bazaar; it is as though we have stepped back several years, to the days when man owned man and called him slave. Today is that very era; inside this

train, amid its steam and smoke, I see at this station that multitudes of human beings have been chained within large steel cages. They sell them in the market so that they may labor for their master, plow the earth, take the captive women, enjoy them, and stockpile children for tomorrow. And I have seen this grand market many times over, and now the train passengers have seen it too.

Behold, this train of the Ashraf al-Anwa' is in motion—the day when man was another's slave, and the day when the lawful-bodied animal became man's property. And I hear the collision between the opinions and voices of the ancient gods in the resonant voice of today's deity, who, roaring and shouting, perhaps alters His words:

What if, on that very day of sacrifice, Abraham had slaughtered Ishmael?

What if, amid the war of the virtuous gods, the triumphant god had shouted that human flesh is halal—what then?

What if the scholars of the age, man's manifest machine, and his peerless staff had issued a fatua in the chatter of intellectual tongues that the greatest amount of protein resides in human buttocks—what then?

Have you ever considered this? But this grand tunnel is meant precisely for such contemplation. And suspended in time within the wagon, I chanted to them that perhaps with a slight jolt everything could have been different, and now we would be in another world where man loved man.

Do you love man?

Bon appétit.

The train stopped and we stepped out. The people looked around; it was the same ancient graveyard of their own mortality, but upon the signboards, the inscriptions and motifs had been renewed. Now I saw the gleaming of a sign that, in place of fried chicken, read: "Fried Human Shoulder." In place of roasted chicken, it read: "Roasted Human Infant."

Human infants were spinning amidst the machinery, revolving within the heat, and the passengers paused for a moment amid the heights, looked on, shocked and lamenting. Yet they saw a multitude in line—in line to buy the fried shoulders and roasted infants, striking at one another's heads and faces to devour this commodity. They saw it, and behold the ravenous appetite in their thighs! One in the line said:

"Oh, it is peerless! It is delicious and soft!"

In the end, a group of passengers who had grown hungry made their way to the first stall and tasted the first fried shoulder in their mouths.

Is it delicious?

Is it soft?

Bon appétit.

Some of the passengers are vomiting; they feel sick and sorrowful, plunged into contemplation by this shock.

Beware lest your vomit, your distress, and your anxieties forge a new god once more! And now some of them will head toward the train and tear it apart; amid the heavy, pain-fraught clamor of the multitudes, they will have no voice, and nothing shall be heard from their hearts.

And I see the grand tables set within this amusement park, spread by families from afar: father, mother, and children, laughing and joking with one another as they devour a roasted infant whose flesh is fresh and supremely soft.

Yet I shall hold the hand of the monster of man; I shall lead him into a house built for the glory of this great name—this grand Royal Omnivore Restaurant, which today, by virtue of all my tananeh being that I surrendered to them, granted me permission to hold my feast right here, and knowingly, they turned off all the lights.

I took the hands of my sorrowful friends—now vomited out and faint—and led them into the restaurant, serving them food.

The lights are extinguished; no one sees a thing, and there is no strength to see in the midst, and the meats before them, by the eternal fragrance of their being, the lust hidden within their mouths, and the unbridled appetite in their speech, will burst forth.

Behold:

The first of the vomiters will reach out and taste the meat in their mouths; for a brief span, they will devour everything

ravenously until it is finished. The vomiting drained their strength, and now that everyone has eaten and been satiated, turn on the lights! Upon the table lie the corpses of infants: there is man, there is pig, there is chicken, there is fish, all are present. In the midst is the tananeh, the thigh, the breast, and the soul. If you look closely, you will see man, and you will see the bull as well; these were the mature ones of the bodies cooked at a single temperature, in a single recipe, and within a single space.

Was it delicious?

Was it soft?

Bon appétit.

Now vomit until morning, and with the remnant of your possessions, forge gods unceasingly; perhaps one of them will forgive you too. Who knows, perhaps shortly hereafter, to deliver you from this shame of existence in your gaze, He will issue a fatwa declaring human flesh halal and forgive your sin.

I shall leave you to your own devices, abandoned within the pain-inflaming marsh of madness, and I shall depart. I shall gaze upon the moon of a hen whose face is pale; her eyes are gone, fixed upon the cold, concrete walls of the slaughterhouse of civilization. She lives in terror of the long, daily sounds within the abattoir of an era that has never slept; she sits awake through the nights until morning, staring. In the silence of every night, she relives her days.

Every day she sees the meat grinder, has heard its sound, and has tasted the extruded paste.

Yes, she filled her beak with the flesh of her own child. She tore her own feet with her beak, hammering her beak against the ground until it grew crooked and distorted. They silenced her with heavy doses of drugs; now she staggers. In the mornings I see her rushing ravenously toward the human paste-maker, plunging her beak into its interior in search of her child. They turned her child into a paste, and I see that she has turned her own feet into paste. With her beak, she pulled out a piece of her own foot, pressed it beneath her bill several times, and dropped it back to the ground. She looks at it; it resembles her child, it is the counterpart of that very one. Now I see her approaching the paste in the mornings, fetching a portion of that paste to a corner, and mixing it with the paste of her own body. She will place it beneath herself and sit upon the mass; she gives birth to it anew, lays eggs once more, pours the eggs into your mouths, and plows the flesh of her own body anew.

I hear the recurring cry of the Ashraf al-Anwa' saying:

"Look at this hen, the filthy, heartless creature; she eats from the paste of their own children."

And then, with that very golden staff of man, they will press the start button of the grinding process once more. And they have not seen that day; they have not heard its existence, and the nobles know that they are omniscient—they know more

of the animals than the animals themselves. And in that omniscience, they failed to foresee the day when the mother mounted the meat grinder and, with her feet shredded up to her feathers, leaped down the slide of her child's life so that they might play together once more within the distant paste. Perhaps their ultimate wish is to play inside the stomach of you, the Akram al-Anwa'. When you have eaten and drunk, at the very least, do not stir; they are terrified of motion.

THE FOURTH STRIKE

I see the great cauldron of life amid a space whose walls are cracked, mud-brick, and heavy; a thin layer of cement covers the flowers, and steel sheets have been placed upon it, culminating in a surface whose expanse is carved with countless allegories. I see the heads of rams, the horns of stags, and the masks of swine carved into the wooden bodies along the wall. Somewhere the ceiling drips, water falls, and elsewhere expansive chandeliers hang from it. Lights beam from every side toward the center and upon the great cauldron—from fiery torches to massive, yellow-hued projectors, all pour down upon the human sun, and from the

midst of the cauldron a smoke rises, a sticky and viscous vapor that will be the evaporation of blood in the air.
Inside the cauldron, blood has been poured up to the throat, and the blood within the cauldron is boiling, and the feast of the Ashraf al-Anwa' is germinating. They will come flocking into the royal kitchen, and every being will pour something into the boiling blood; the primitives come with a large club in hand and throw the bodies of hares, they will throw their prey into the cauldron and watch the hares bubble within the boiling blood. Once more the two-legged stooped ones came, and with stone in hand—stone upon wood, stone upon the empyrean, and the sharpness of the blade in hand—they brought forth the bodies: from rams to wild oxen, from massive mammoths to snow mice, they will cast them all into the midst of the cauldron. And now it is the turn of the captives; they came to the center with a lengthy incantation while the hand of the righteous god rested upon their heads. Before the cauldron, they first recited an incantation, then rose and spun, whereupon before a small effigy symbolizing the righteous god, they struck down a sheep and slit its throat. They emptied the blood running through the sheep's veins and finally threw the skinned carcass into the cauldron. Once more they will fill the cauldron.
In a grand ceremony, while bringing the animals into the arena in droves, they will unite with the hideous sound of the trumpet to plunge their knives into throats, and amid the

howls, they will let out the howl of their own victory. They have filled the cauldron, yet much blood remains in the midst, and the Ashraf al-Anwa' is lamenting at the sight of this watery soup: Where is the meat, then? A ten-year-old child said this reluctantly in his mother's arms, and then threw a tantrum, turning away and walking out through the corridor. Mother, I loathe the watery soup; there must be more meat inside. And the mother blew upon the horn, pressed the button, or screamed—I know not, perhaps she lit a fire on the rooftop and signaled with smoke. But at last, the great staff of man came rushing forth in that peerless majesty while its tracks churned the earth and drove the wounds before it. Now this colossal human machine, this great god of the Ashraf al-Anwa', like a massive mechanical excavator, will stretch its hands toward the cauldron and, with a jolt to the countless pressures, will cast the bound bodies into the midst of the cauldron.

The machine is spinning; its motor turns, and with every rotation of the blade, the production line is set up. Upon the rail, life after life spins onward before the propeller-like blades. Will there not be a few blades so as not to wound and spoil the pig, the mother, and the child ahead? They will slaughter them all and cast them into the cauldron. Now the cauldron is filling, and the human child sees that the carcasses are piled upon one another, spilling over the edge of the cauldron onto the ground; there are so many that the

blood no longer has the strength to cook them. The mother is joyous, the child is excited, and life is terrified. And still they will pour; they will pour so much that ultimately they weave a sticky soup, so thick with the flesh of the bodies that it breaks the spoons within itself.

This food has no fragrance; I loathe its non-existent guise. I know not whether this issued from the tongue of that same child or his mother said it, or the man who had come home grew frustrated, or a king in the distance wearing a silk robe said this after hanging the palace cook. But I see multitudes in white robes lined up to sprinkle their own spices into the midst of the great bronze cauldron; they place a long ladder before them, climb upon it, and pour the essence and fragrance of their being into its interior.

Is the first of them Abraham? No, there were others before him; yes, amid those very caves in the heart of the tyrants, in a feverish, shared uniformity, a stooped, two-legged creature with an unintelligible voice chanted an incantation for the congregation and poured into the cauldron incense made from the bark of distant trees. He has not stepped down from the stairs before a scroll in hand containing the ten commandments, ten acknowledgments of loss, and a thousand narrated tales was cast into it by Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, or Joseph and Jesus. I saw the boiling head of my mother amidst the water, and the scroll fell upon her face. The great one had written: "Eat and drink of that which

God has provided for you, and render Him thanks."
Abraham plunged the ladle into the cauldron and stirred it so that all would be consumed by the meat within the cauldron, and once more he threw his scrolls into the feed of the Ashraf al-Anwa'. Upon the slips of paper, it was written in huge letters: "Ashraf, Sharaf, Raf." Holding a lantern, he shouted for more scrolls to be brought to him; they passed them hand over hand, climbing halfway up the stairs until they reached Abraham's hand, and he cast them all into its interior. He had also brought more blood to make human food more succulent and flavorful, and finally, having slit Ishmael's throat, he placed his head upon the rim of the cauldron and turned him upside down so that all his blood would boil within the cauldron and harmonize the consistency of this food.
As he went down, still a throng in white robes kept going; they climbed over one another and reached the gate of the cauldron. Their hands were full of lengthy tales, they brought the spices of grace, and they poured batches upon batches of the noble ones into the cauldron. Upon it was written: human dignity. They poured their taringi into the cauldron like capsules upon which "Ashraf" was written in tiny script. They had long beards, noble faces, and their voices were calm. They spoke with gravity and poise, and they had arisen into the world in the garb of inquiry. They thought and thought, and threw all their thoughts into the cauldron so

that it would boil more and become thoroughly cooked. It was one of them who lowered the heat under the cauldron, covered it halfway, and poured blood from his own veins upon it, chanting, "It must cook more and be thoroughly cooked." And now once more it is boiling; they come ceaselessly from every side, in every tongue, and with every hue, chanting the song of human taringi, and casting more into the midst of the cauldron. And once more the ladder before the great cauldron of the human feast hosts the exalted ones who, in white robes with large glasses and unkempt hair, pull glass tubes from their laps and will pour their contents into the human feed. Upon the face of a pigeon chick I saw them write protein; upon the eyes of a mother who was a sheep, it was written vitamin, and the masters brought forth the tubes anew and continually added to its fragrance. Now that they are stepping down from the ladder of the cauldron, multitudes are bringing torches close around the cauldron, sitting behind projectors and rocking them. The light show before the cauldron has mesmerized eyes; a throng has cast a purple light upon the cauldron, and now everyone sees the vapor of blood in the sky as purple, possessing many details—a beautiful purple moving into the vapor like the beating of a heart, yet you do not see, and I will tell you that the vapor amid this purple of blood is the picture of the fears of mothers who until their last breath thought they would survive, who had hope and died of hope

time and again. It is the heartbeat of children whose hearts stopped before their heads were severed. Amid this bloody incense, by whose dance the people are hypnotized, I see a pig staring at the long queue of the carcasses of its brothers, its sisters, and its mothers, and the slaughterer drags it to the abattoir, and the pig suddenly collapses to the ground. You do not see, but I see it still; I see you.

Beside the cauldron, a little further away, you are standing in a line one behind the other, large pots in your hands to take this food home, to pour it into the gaping mouths of your children and satisfy your bellies. I see you hand-in-hand in the communion of appetite; you reach into your intestines and tickle it, you will press the desire and pull it out and inflate the craving. I see you with sharp files in hand, filing your molar teeth, sharpening them, and preparing them to tear flesh. Files in hand amid the line while saliva drips from your mouths, you have filed and sharpened your front teeth until ultimately one of the mystics, philosophers, scientists, kings, and thugs has beaten upon the drum of tearing, and with pots you will bash one another's heads and faces, and fill your stomachs with the essence of life's ripeness.

Do you know whence all this feast and the great bronze cauldron arose?

In some distant place, one of the kings and commanders—perhaps the penitent ones, or I know not, the tasters—came and shouted aloud in the midst of the great square of the

Ashraf al-Anwa': "The day of judgment is at hand! The earth is scheduled to come to our feast and choose for itself the song of songs of the ages; it wishes to choose the supreme life in the world."
He said this and threw a flea into man's ear.
Humans ran this way and that; all were building, and everyone licked the staff upon their brows from dawn till dusk. Children piled pieces of stone together to build a house; mothers stacked pots and fashioned debates.
Abraham reached out and built a house for himself with the flesh of Ishmael, Isaac, and his wife. Everyone was building, and whatever was beside them they piled upon one another.
Man built the greatest towers until it reached the heavens, thrust its head into the clouds, stuck excrement to the sky, and planted its new home even in the midst of the moon.
They say they went onto the surface of the moon with a jar of their last king's excrement in hand, and took their first step in such a way as to plant the first excrement there too, and with their hands build the effigy of the righteous god or the staff-bearing god that remains enduringly in the moon.
I see man's craving in this artificiality, with what greed they build; they have raised the greatest halls to celebrate therein the day of leaping upon one another and mating with one another. They have lined up the greatest restaurants and pour into the cauldrons from meats that no one has even heard the name of, they possess essences that no one has

ever imagined, and they have filled their bellies with food whose call those in far-off places have never heard. And now, in this building—while the great staff stood before multitudes of humans who built everything, and there was not a needle's breadth of ground left that they had not stuffed into their sacks—the boiling bronze cauldron is cooking to attune the feast of man.

They want the earth to give them of that same cooked extract with their own hands, and their desire is the selection and voice of the earth to choose its noblest child; and today is the day of judgment, the day when the earth, stumbling and rising slowly—while the moon had told it that the excrement within it had caused its incessant vomiting—came to the humans to fulfill the promise.

Kings, commanders, elders, and creators among humans went out to greet the earth and brought it into a glass courtyard far away from the people. They surrounded the earth and brought it tea. The earth sat upon a chair, looking at the humans, while the people gazed upon its body. In their seclusion, I heard someone ask another: "What think you, how does the earth taste? Is its flesh tough or tender?" To which the earth called out:

"I have fulfilled my promise and today I am in your midst; tell me what you want of me."

The humans summoned their foremost one, who was the master of the Ashraf al-Anwa', that he might proclaim to the earth:

"O Earth, our house, we know that you are joyful to possess such a being upon your body, and we have called you today to come among the people and proclaim unto them: who is the tarina within your body?"

The earth said:

"Be it so, let us go that I may proclaim it for you. I knew beforehand and have even prepared a speech for you."

Then it drew the speech paper from within itself, and with utmost agility, the humans poured it into her hand; taking the paper in hand, they read aloud:

"Humans! I know not why all this game-playing to be the tarina is, yet if taringi lies within the era of my well-being, I have prepared a list for you and shall read it:

Plankton, which are my lungs and produce half of the world's oxygen.

Bees, which are the architects of the world's tables and the guarantors of plants' survival.

Earthworms, which are the engineers of my soil and eradicate barrenness.

Broad-leaved trees, which are the beating heart of the atmosphere and the regulators of my breaths."

The human reader had gone mad, reading the names on the list:

Fungi, bacteria, ants, bats, whales, elephants, and so on...
He grew furious and screamed:
"What is this gibberish you have written, you deranged, manic creature? Meaning we are lesser even than bacteria? Damn you, you faceless, promiscuous speaker!"
He leaped toward the earth and struck its face several blows, then roared and shouted:
"Tomorrow I will flay your hide, I will have the ozone torn to shreds, I will bring the sun down upon you, I will pull out your guts and roast them on a brazier so you may understand who the most tarin of all eras is!"
Several others of the Ashraf al-Anwa' surrounded him and whispered into his ear:
"Calm yourself."
Then one of the sagacious ones of the era whispered into his ear:
"The people are awaiting the earth; we must give them an answer, it cannot be thus. They have sat waiting for the coming of the earth for years; we must make the earth drunk, that is the only solution."
Then they brought great jars of wine, and several men seized the earth by hands and feet, pouring fine wine down its throat as far as it would reach, until the earth staggered.
They lifted the earth up; the earth stroked one of the humans and caressed him, saying: "How kind you are, my little darling."

Now they are carrying the earth piggyback into a courtyard where countless humans are waiting for it, all gazing upon the mouth of the earth to proclaim the tarina of the era.
Behind the curtain, the sagacious man kept saying to the earth:
"Some are waiting to hear the name of man from your lips; if you go and quietly say that the tarina of the era is man, everyone will grow calm."
The earth said:
"The song of what?"
The sagacious man swallowed his saliva and said:
"The tarina, man; just say these two words, then we shall sleep together, shall we, my earth?"
The earth nodded its head several times, cleared its throat, and said:
"Very well, my darling, I will come soon."
The curtain was pulled aside, and the earth stepped forward onto the balcony of man's grand staff-bearing palace. All the torches were upon the face of the earth, and the earth, stumbling with the bloody red of its eyes, went onto the balcony and proclaimed thus:
The song of man sings the animal.
The multitude before it gazed upon the earth in bewilderment, and someone from within the palace behind the balcony window shouted:
"The tarin of the tarin eras is man!"

In accordance with his cry, countless among the throng broke into cheers, and they swiftly dragged the earth inward from the balcony. And the people knew that the highest life in the world is man, and now in the feast of the Ashraf al-Anwa', they will grant the great bronze cauldron so that all may eat and drink, and sit upon the great raised wing of man, and believe in the air that the earth is flat, that the sun revolves around its own house and the earth itself before our feet—for faith is loftier than any true call or voice in the world.

Now that the banquet and dinner feast have ended, I see upon a field of white bones that a lofty body will walk. The climax of this civilization's heart is slaughter; he is the most transcendent in this butchery, and with bloody hands, carrying his prey upon his shoulder, he will ascend the mountain of corpses and shout:

"O people, O noble ones of the world, O peerless Ashrafs, you are the most dignified era, you are the highest of this song; ooze forth, O high-seated ones of the world!"

He has filed his teeth for years; now when he opens his mouth, it is all fangs. Lifting the carcass of one of his preys high, he shouted at the throng:

We are carnivores!

We are the sole carnivores!

What have we to do with this grass and plant?

Then he bared his teeth, and before everyone sank his teeth into the carcass of a deer he had hunted, and with blood in his mouth, as he chewed the flesh with immense pressure and swallowed it, he roared:
We are the supreme carnivores!
He held up an image of a great interlocking chain before the eyes of the audience and shouted:
We stand at the apex of this chain, done with eating; no one shall have the power to stand beside us, and we are the sole carnivores, the loftiest carnivores, and the greatest of the eras.
He tore the flesh of his prey in his mouth to pieces and said:
Come, let us show this greatness to the world with our teeth, and the earth knows that the supreme, the strongest, the greatest, and the most predatory is also man.
It is this capable man who can turn everyone beneath his pyramid into food.
By his command, he summoned his tribe who were returning from the hunt, having hunted countless hunters.
I saw countless lions, tigers, leopards, and wolves that these ones dragged by the teeth and abandoned in the midst of humans, and their conqueror shouted:
One must eat only meat, and salvation lies precisely in this; look upon my hands, look upon my manliness, look upon my having and my craving, all of it belongs to me, I am the male of the era, and the secret of taringi lies in this very devouring.

Then all together they sank their teeth into the raw, bare flesh of the lions, and the curtain fell.
Do you not see the dancing of the waves of this sea in their eyes?
Have you not seen the ending in a great ocean?
Has its wave not struck your body yet?
Have they not, for instance, imprisoned you beneath the yoke of the wretched's weakness, since you are a woman?
Was the knife in your throat not the focus of the agonizing pain of vexation that you are infidels?
You know not; be it that you know not, but come, look at the world through my glasses, and let me cook only grass for you within the bronze of the great cauldron that we may eat together.
Behold the day when the interior of the cauldrons was only water, only lentils, chickpeas, potatoes, and beans.
Imagine—was Abraham, after all, a saint?
Was sacrifice beside the point or a denial?
If you ate grass, if you went grazing, would your pride be broken?
And your children?
Would his too be broken?
Was the battlefield in the midst?
What if on the primordial day when he smashed the stones together and created the sharpest fire, it had not been so?

Fire merely warmed, stone merely built houses, and what was the predicament of the atom in those days?
You know not; if the first gentle ram had remained peacefully by your side forever and you played together, what would your children have done?
Would they have plunged sharp teeth into their own mother's intestines?
You know not; be it so, you know not, but into the maw where the greens of the leaves have gone, will the redness of the neighbors' blood go?
Will the stone that no one knows is for smashing be bashed upon another's head?
Do you think we would have progressed on that day too?
Would bombs have piled up in such a way that by pressing a button a city—of small and large, of every living soul within it—would end in ash and shadow, and life would remain trapped in the mouth of the earth for a hundred years, and whatever it spewed out would be the flaw of the era and simultaneous pain?
You know not?
Know it not, there is no blame upon us; at least you know this much, that you are sated in this knowingness. Whatever is proclaimed to you will brim over your existence, and in that cauldron if there were only earth, only sun and light, would you not become trees, would you not remain calm and

patient, would you not curse the wretched, would you not grant life and bury receptivity?

You know not?

I know; you know enough that you have taken the actual to be truth in your own imagination.

O knowing ones of the world, amid all your data from those days, behold how the turbulence of fear, the eating of pain, the rumination of suffering, and the swallowing of life have created death—a death as vast as the swallowing of a name they call Ashraf al-Anwa'.

Let go, I know, Ashrafs, I know; come, let us mingle in our heavenly courtyard, come, let us set forth once more into the Royal Omnivore Restaurant, and let me read to you from the great placard hung upon it today:

We stand at the peak of the food chain.

May this crown of taringi be blessed for you!

In the end, standing at the peak of the summit, we shall enter its interior.

I see the tables arranged side by side; amidst the chairs, the Ashrafs sit and chant songs. They have made a choice as to which of you they shall tear apart at will within this great chain, and all is for their fellows. And in the midst of the foremost chairs, I see the foreman pressing the thigh of a sheep into his mouth, devouring it with ravenous greed, while sinking his teeth into the thigh of a worker in the factory:

"You bastard, work with greater speed, this is no poorhouse!"
Then he pulls his filed teeth out of the sheep's thigh, polishes them anew a few times, and plunges them with force into his wife's buttocks:
"You harlot, you have no right to leave the house, I will not grant you permission to go out!"
And finally, he casts a gnashing of teeth at his child as well.
Yet opposite him at the table was a man licking the fin of a shark, and with the friction of this encounter, his tongue swirled everywhere over the women. Every single body that was a woman, possessing a curve upon her flesh, he danced to his tongue—whether she was a ship's maid or a maid within a dream, a mandated legal wife or a wedded guest at banquets, he drove them all to the wasteland, squandering their lives by devouring his own lusts.
Beside him, I saw a woman who with ravenous greed tore into a chicken breast and mocked countless others in a row, jolting them; they will drag out the breasts drenched in blood so that she may sink her bite deeper and grow ever sated.
Now that we are here, she will eat so much of their breasts that afterward she will vomit, and give her vomit to those very ones to eat and send blessings upon the pure soul of this lofty woman—for after all, she owns several shop fronts, is the master of hundreds of factories, and is the lord of the day of judgment in pretense.

Amid this restaurant, everyone will file their teeth and sit waiting for the next meal, which one day is a chicken thigh, one night a woman's breast, and another day a man's face; they will sink their teeth into everything and make it their own.

Now that you are all devouring your own ears, I shall give you the cement soldiers that you may gaze upon their cement faces; gaze upon those who tear from morning till night in the rigid slaughterhouse room of civilization.

Have you seen your machine of violation?

Finest oil must be poured within them, and you will abandon them in the abyss; they are your sharp teeth, your piercing nails, they will go among the intestines and pull them out, they will course ravenously through the throats and press forward; amidst the slaughterhouses, in the heart of the butcheries, they will tear things to pieces for you with teeth, with fangs, with nails so that you may eat, grow more masculine, grow more tarin, and grow more symmetrical.

Did they go home?

Did they have a mother?

Where will their children be, into whose throat will the nail of their last one wander? The left-behind nail of one of them was in the throat of a woman with whom he lay two years ago and whose yearning for fertility he did not answer.

If one day a child of the cement soldiers acts up and talks back at home, can you gather the knives from the homes?

Is there no longer any sharpness in the midst?
You know not—beyond them, among many gravestones in the heart of this human home, they buried themselves in their own graves; they jolt, they have bitten so much, pulled so much, contracted so much seizure, blood has spilled upon their hands so that now, by night, by day, they see only blood, they hear only blood, and they go only mad.
In the heart of the day when you filled the city square with countless victims and the children saw it all, what will happen?
Tomorrow, into whose mouth, into the life of which soul, will the seed in their hands turn into what blade?
If you set a cat on fire, do you not have a flea in your trousers, and if someone kills your husband, will termites bite your buttocks?
I know not, but amidst this great restaurant I saw him in a corner, advancing amidst this predation.
Where will man remain?
What song has the tarina of the era chanted for him among the loftiest chains?
Will his waves not wash over your face within the mirror of this loftiness?
The first waiter who passed by him—if he saw him and desired him, if he liked his buttocks—what will happen?
Above this great placard, will it not be written:
We sit upon the peak of the chain of libido

Or the acquisition of property?
Or the consolidation of thought?
And whatever you desire, think, and mention.
The first invocation was made by taking one's own name in the heart of the damp darkness of a room by pressing one's organ, or by pressing a sharp blade from behind upon a tiny throat that was only ten years old—I know not.
Yet amidst the royal restaurant, knives are many, the artery is repetition, the placard is in plain sight, and the bloodbath is in denial.
His first denier he took from behind to the cooking room and cast into the great bronze cauldron. Now that you have eaten the denial, you will drive your knives into one another's bellies and intestines, and the feast of the Ashraf al-Anwa' is nigh in truth.
The mother will slit her child's neck from behind, and a man, out of pure pleasure, will drive a knife into another man's chest and gaze upon him for half an hour.
Now everyone will seat someone before them whom they have believed to be the tarin, and with knife, with wood, with hand, with organ, and with bomb they will torture him until the ages cause them to sit smiling, having set foot upon the first of this chain.
Leave off these ravenous ravings; I know your blood is boiling from this song of the era, and you have summoned

me to the courtyard of your feast to chant of it to the throng that man is advancing.

I am in the midst, in the heart of the back room of this grand feast, in a room that smells of royal scent. I see countless well-dressed people who have fashioned shoes for themselves from the victim's skin and called it fine leather. I see upon their bodies the cloaks of animal skin and fur, having stripped tails, fins, hides, and teeth and donned them. They clung to a fragrance harvested from the navels of gazelles, from the flesh of children, from the bones of fishes, from the glandular secretions within animals. Clinging to the fragrance, draped in robes, they will now draw their faces over them. From the fat of body, skin, flesh, and sanctuary, from the incurable pain of dying, and from kidney and protein within me and all that lies between, they will shroud their skin and proceed to the conspicuous hall.

Presently, some of the servants will lift the trains of their garments and act as groomsmen to this fair bride; she stood upon a grand balcony before a multitude clad in white robes, and before her were the loftiest and greatest of the world—they will behold her, and mouths will burst open.

Give ear, for this extract of human living, the Akram al-Anwa', shall chant unto you:

"We take pride in honoring human dignity and glory in this great path."

Her sentence dissolved as her lipstick bled across the center of her lips, harvested from the body of an insect, and the people beheld her with a countenance whose mouth stood ready to drink.

Bring forth the bronze cauldron; these are hungry, bring food unto your masters! And the cauldron bubbled within the great building—which was the core of human enthronement upon the worldly throne of kings—and all gathered around it with pots in hand, waiting, and the beautiful bride filled the pot, searching with knife and fork through the soup for a morsel, only to find that all the food had turned to a paste; forsooth, it had remained too long upon the fire. The bride drained the pot and swallowed everything within.

She loves fish, and her lover is today upon the sea; the lover commanded from the ship's helm to catch fish for their eternal upcoming love, and the nets of civilization plunged into the womb of the sea and began the catch.

The first net hurled the first shoal of fish upon the deck. The lineage of fishes upon the deck, while their mouths drank in the thick breath of human death, twitched and danced. The man upon the ship's gallery gazed out upon the deck and bound the slickness of their bodies amidst their scales to the slick gown of the bride of civilization; they twitched—here the gas chamber is silent.

The bride of civilization loves fish, and the lineage of fishes shall be condemned to swallow all the toxic gas-ification of humanity.
I see the painful silence within the eyes of the fishes; have you heard the bloody crimson of their eyes, which screams in silence unceasingly?
All the inner organs within are exploding, breath is held hard within the breast of the sea, your eyes are starting from their sockets and darkness presses tight around your throat, your breast is bursting, your lungs are detonating, your entire being is casting outward, drawing inward, and you remain standing in place as the fishes danced.
Aye, she saw the dancing of their fins, and I saw her bloody eyes draining the final draught of her life from the very heart of those eyes; now she is in the hands of the sea's lover, who will carry her away with him for his bride, placing her into the bride's mouth, and in the death of corporeality while their lips met amidst the smoke of incense and candle, half-naked and playing together, they will consume the fish. At the final meeting of lips while the fish was also striking against her mouth, I saw her eyes once more and the redness of her bloodstain, which now will burst within the mouth of the sea's bride and stimulate the senses of her tongue.
At this sourness and astringency of blood amidst the veins and sinews of the fish's eyes, she will purse her face, narrow her eyes, and spit the fish carcass upon the ground,

dissatisfied with these gifts; she will grant no more embraces to the lover, and the lover is today the murderer of the sea, dragging millions of fishes out of the water only to cast their carcasses back into the water, for his lover did not grant him entry on a day, and the sourness of the fish's blood grieved his lover. I see death amidst the countless carcasses of silver-finned corporeality of fishes within the ocean.

Turn not your eyes away; behold, this entire massive mass of corpses within your intestines was once in the sea, and to the struggle of being beside each other's lovers it shall go further; come, let us plunge into the water and swim together amidst this flood of carcasses, this massacre of bloods within the heart of intestines.

How many minutes of endurance remain in the midst?

Breathe; water in your throat, stomach acid in your air, how far will it go and to what length does your endurance stand?

The fishes are dead, and we survived anew.

You emerged from the water, battered yourselves against the walls of the stomach, and issued forth from the mouths; now that you remain outside the inner suffocation of the era, the fishes are dead.

You saw not the end,

and this pain continued still, compressed once more, went black, convulsed, and the fishes are dead, and the bride of civilization today within the Royal Omnivore Restaurant, in

mockery of the sourness of the blood of her lover's sacrifice, shall order the heart of a whale and swallow it all at once.

THE FIFTH STRIKE

In the vast graveyard of Ashraf al-Anwa', where a great plain stands in the middle, there was a family consisting of two women, two men, and two children; half of them were human and half were cattle. The two families lived together within a single climate—a climate unlike an ordinary graveyard, with plants sprouting from between its fissures. From among the large tombstones of this house, I have seen the solitary growth of a blade of grass that will one day be trampled to dust by the feet of bipeds, and everything will be paved with cement. They will pour cement over its lungs, for the masters detest weeds, and now, amidst the weed-like

chaos, under the guise of rains upon the dim facades of the corridors, they will gaze upon one another, and Ashraf al-Anwa' stands in the middle. He put them to service and exploited the lineage of the bovine folk. They were buried within the mud-brick walls of a stable and went out to graze in the mornings. The mother's breast was sucked by mouths, and the rope was around the father's neck as they pulled the iron, leveling the earth and the graves.

Yet their children played together, roamed the plain together, and slept in the embrace of the earth. They woke in the morning to each other's voices and went to their homes at night to the sound of each other's calls. I saw the current of life within their gazes, and the human lineage lived alongside the lineage of the bovine folk once more.

Mornings were for labor, for pulling, for giving milk, and for bleeding iron; and evenings were for sleeping together, and for the children, weaving play into dreams.

Man departed, receding into the dust of andasas, upon the dream-like call of the firmament, in the mouth of Abraham and the damp philosopher, within the body of joyous intellectuals, he beheld the lesson of man. They ignited the factory, and out poured the final product of becoming-human: a child—a child who will now ceaselessly chant a call. He is nauseated by this grazing, sickened by sharing a cup with the cattle. He is hunted by this evacuation of meaning within himself, and into his ear they endlessly whisper:

Oh Ashraf al-Anwa', what business has your nobility with the ignoble-footed?
Upon the white canvas, and with its small spots of yesterday, whether Ebrahim was the first to detonate the bombs, or the sad, lonely philosopher who saw man as the axis of the world, I know not; but someone finally detonated the tiny black droplets, and now the canvas is entirely black.
He will gaze at his phallus, which was feeble in seizing women. He will gaze at his stomach, which was bereft of the softness of children's flesh, and the child will let out a roar: Father, I want veal! All my friends eat and have eaten lamb, chick, and veal.
The father departed, reached the lineage of the bovine folk, mounted upon their mother, and bound her eyes with a large cloth. He nailed the father to the wall with a chain against the floor, and finally cast a rope around the neck of the bovine child. He will drag him out into the square.
Oh hardworking philosophers, oh court scientists, oh idle saints, come into the square; they are going to skewer veal. Come and claim your share of this succulent roast; these people are your hand-kissers. The father will bow in reverence before the long row of thinkers and physicians—who consider the tender flesh of lambs to be the ultimate source of protein—raise the knife, and the child, plate in hand, will sit waiting for the first morsel of his former playmate's thigh. Amidst this becoming-human, sleepless

day and night in anticipation of biting into that thigh, he will now set fire upon a glowing brazier to the fiery flesh of his own running, the gazing upon the sky, the sun and sun-hues upon the neck, the friendship of an untravelled era, and will swallow its rank stench, for the greatness of tomorrow's phallus is to tear apart the world, and the satiation of his tongue's lust is in the mirror of the swamp.

The veal of the bovine folk was in the child's mouth as he saw his ear in the hand of a philosopher who recited to him:

Man is the measure of all things; and the standard was pressed into the small thigh of the calf, and the roar of his father shook the roof of their house. The child heard the sound—the roar of the father—and remembered the small voice of his friend who once, during a game, wounded his foot with a piece of stone and roared, and now he saw his friend's body upon the tablecloth, entirely blood, food, and flesh.

That very neck, that very head, and that very foot—his foot was there too. He stared fixedly at the wound on his foot while his ear, in the hand of a great sage, recited:

Man is the most wondrous and noble of creatures, for he can become whatever he wishes. Now he has become. The factory of human-becoming yielded its product, and the child pulled his friend's foot out from the tablecloth and sucked upon it with his teeth, tasting the water lingering within the flesh that had now grown succulent, and now the mother of the

bovine folk is battering her head against the wall of the stable. The house shakes, and they will eat again. Perhaps the father went and slit his own father's head; perhaps the mother grew distraught and spent that night until morning in the stable flogging the mother's body, and perhaps his offspring tore apart his offspring.

It is torn, eat it, it is delicious, juicy and tender, they have cooked it well and it is joyous. He is joyous over this human select; someone will read this into the father's ear as well, and finally, all will gather around the table to chant their prayer of blessing and prosperity.

In the imagery before me, I have repeatedly witnessed the visage of a father who, in the midst of plowing, hurled himself against the plowshare. Striking his head against the iron several times, he fell to the earth. I see a mother who, night and morning in the stable, will dash herself against the wall, leaving her head bloody behind. Indeed, they slip upon the footprints of their child, they lie down, and yield themselves to his likeness; yet perhaps you have not seen it, perhaps you have not done it, and perhaps you know everything, but amidst this frantic striving, within the heart of this bloodshed and suffering, where a child screamed before the executioner, urinated upon himself, fell to the ground, and fought to his last breath, someone will whisper into the executioner's ear: What was it you wished to do?

Do you expect us to slaughter the carrots, to murder the lettuces, to violate the wounded bodies of the beans?
Oh, you dishonorable, merciless wretches, how can your hearts consent to taking their lives?
Every day, the father would sit before his family and preach to them; he spoke of the incomparable suffering of a carrot which, as it was dying, touched the father's hands several times with its hanging green roots and pleaded with him.
He read of the day he had seen with his own eyes how his wife, while chopping a lettuce to make the evening salad, watched the lettuces writhing together, and the lettuce bled onto the floor until morning; he is now the interpreter of the voice of plants that roar and howl from night till morning, bleed when their heads are severed, and call out for their children. He has seen with his own eyes how a carrot among thousands of carrots took its child between its teeth, licked its face, and finally, once again in the ears of all of them—from father to fathers, from child to mothers, on a day when everyone sat together—someone in a long, white robe would recite:
Animals are nothing but soulless automatic machines; they possess no feeling or consciousness, and the enlightened, ramping upon their bodies, know that man is the measure, man is the honor, man is the feeling, the world is man, and the animal is māl, and māl loathes man.

And now that Ashraf al-Anwa' rides upon the white wing of reason, I see that the highest of them have perished along with their tribe upon the food chain. Yellow-faced and constantly vomiting, they still continue to gorge on meat. Large, bloody red patches have fallen upon their bodies; their joints are intertwined and torn, and they are incapable of touching one another. In pain, as they drag themselves across the ground, their entire frames are bursting; their blood gushed forth from their mouths in gasps, their hearts came under pressure and are bursting. Their kidneys are heavy and their intestines are full of large growths containing all appetite and taringi, and I see that once more upon the earth, with a lamenting and powerless hand, they will crush a beetle and carry it to their mouths—this, the highest among the chains.

This noble tribe, which saw singularity solely in eating meat and viewed itself as the sole carnivore, continued its feasting while sowing more madmen of its own. They will eat even more meat to attach themselves to their robes, and I have seen man sitting in luxurious dental offices, ordering the dentist to pull out his teeth and implant in their place a borrowed set of shark or wolf teeth, which would be more predatory than a grass-eating miller.

I see them in their damp rooms, reaching inside and pulling out their intestines; with scissors they will cut half of it and sew the rest together. They will buy fresh acid from shops

and fill their stomachs with it so that the meat digests sooner and more easily.

Now Ashraf al-Anwa' is in the midst of a self-rebirth which this tananeh of his will not answer; he is re-creating this great monster in powerlessness, sitting thusly in factory-becoming and needing to possess a fresh body.

Now this great Ashraf al-Anwa', who is the measure, will drag his tongue upon the ground to heighten his palate; from morning till night he will drag his nails across the earth to make them sharp and honed, and finally, bearing a new semblance, he will stride toward the greatest hunters and, in a duel with a wolf, strike it down and eat it alive—while his intestines are full of the growths of taringi, and before them all, contrary to the emotionless machines that they deem animals, I have seen a great lion cooking food for its child.

Do you know that the lion's cub loathes meat?

Meaning if a lioness leaves a piece of bare meat beside a banana, her cub will vomit over the meat and, with great eagerness for the fragrant scent of the banana, will devour the banana, and this uncomprehending, emotionless lion knows not what to do. And I have seen her in the kitchen in the heart of the jungle; she bought garlic, cultivated onions, and made paste.

She discovered all the spices and eventually brought all the zebras into servitude to chop firewood for her.

Then, riding upon elephants, they are brought to her mighty hand, and finally, when she places the pot of meat over the flame—from the navel of the deer's body to fragrant plants in the desert and dried spices in India—she blends them all together and cooks them on the gas for over two hours, and finally places it before her child, who retches several times from the reek of its stench. In the end, she shoves it forcibly between his legs and pours it into his mouth—this thick soup of human flesh; after all, he hunted a human and cooked it for his child.

Then perhaps she changed the meat, I know not—for instance, she killed a deer, hunted a rhinoceros, brought fish and slaughtered chickens, and ordered all animal species streaming across the world to gather every seasoning, ultimately creating a feast to carve model after model of meat and meats, from stews and roasts, from fried dishes to kebabs, so that her child might come and taste them one by one, vomit, and finally choose one. Now the mother knows the secret of feeding meat to this child; she will issue this recipe across the realm of lions so that no lion henceforth feeds its child anything other than deer meat amidst saffron with abundant rosemary, and her cub stealthily tasted the neighbors' oranges and went up into the trees with the monkeys to chew a little fresh banana and savor its taste in his mouth.

Again it was the kitchen, and this time not in the heart of a green jungle, but in the heart of a human graveyard, upon a tomb in the heavenly earth and upon the golden-hued body of cement.

I see the white and glossy tiles of this kitchen, which a mother will polish from morning till night, and now upon the table in the heart of this small hall, a human child will sit before his mother, and the mother will serve him meat.

My darling, today I have prepared for you from the most incomparable chick of all ages, the smallest and tenderest juicy flesh of animals, so that you may drink and take life, my darling.

She placed the plate on the table and sat waiting for her child to devour it.

The child is not eating; perhaps he is twelve years old, I know not, but his stature is around that age, and he did not touch the food before him. The mother asked in agitation:

Does the taste of the chick not please you?

Would you like me to plant and fry for you fish in the frying-pan, cow in the cow-pan, lamb in the lamb-pen, and sheep in the sheep-fold?

Do you want it fried?

Mother, do you like it roasted?

Her child shook his head in denial, and finally the mother said:

What has happened, my darling? Will you not tell your mother?
The child slowly opened his mouth and said:
Mother, I no longer wish to eat meat.
Why?
Have you gone mad?
Has something happened?
Has someone told you something?
Have you seen something?
Yes, mother, yesterday when we went out of town with friends, I saw one of the great slaughterhouses of civilization, and the frantic cries of the animals amidst the furnaces drove me mad. I no longer wish to eat meat; I loathe the shedding of their blood.
The mother went and poured tea, then sat near her child, placed his head upon her breast, and recited:
May I be sacrificed for that compassionate and tender heart of yours, that you take after your mother, my dearest heart; with your abstaining, nothing will change.
The earth held fast in his mouth, the wheels stopped turning, and the world came to a halt. I, as tananeh, see right there in the provisions of the kitchen how all the slaughtered animals dedicated in the mother's name were brought to the kitchen window and poured their blood into the small chamber.
All the chickens, the fish that had little blood, and all the cows and sheep, rams, lambs, I know not, pigs and sharks—

whatever the mother ate, has eaten until now, and whose blood was shed, will now pour from the window into the room. The kitchen is half-filled with blood, and I see that the mother was summoned into a circle like their lineage.

All the slaughtered animals were brought for her husband, her child, her daughter, her son. Once again there will be blood, rising from the middle. The blood bubbled, climbed the walls, and reached the ceiling. The mother and child were drowning in the blood when the mother opened the kitchen door and stepped into the hall.

Now the depth of the blood receded from the middle and spread throughout the entire house. All the slain creatures of the animal realm will belong to her lineage.

Would you like, for instance, to make the father and the devoted, compassionate mother our measure? To line up her mother, her sister, her brother, alongside her spouse's sister, brother, father, and mother?

Or perhaps you would prefer—perhaps you did not like these and disdained them; very well, let us go and peer into the banquets, weddings, and celebrations of the compassionate mother.

On the day she was wed, all the guests who ate lamb, devoured chicken, swallowed fish, and drained beef—shall we bring all that day and all those oceans of blood to the ceiling of the house?

Graduation day, the birth of a child, teething parties, university-bound celebrations, the child's wedding, and thousands of endless feasts—to what height will they fill the ceiling, and will there remain any space left for the mother and child to breathe?

You do not know?

Very well, but I have brought you a gift; this devoted, compassionate mother is an entrepreneur, she is the greatest entrepreneur in the world, and within her factory thousands upon thousands of the human species toil. Do you not know how many years she has built this house?

How many meals have her workers eaten?

You do not know?

She commanded it all herself, and this factory shall serve lunch to the workers with its own hands, and I shall see the severed heads of all animals—by the command of the compassionate mother—brought to the mouths of the workers within a greater house, in the heart of an ocean of blood. Swim within it, keep your heads above the water, for the blood in your lungs is like the death of a fish upon dry land; it will administer the very same poison.

The compassionate mother, right in this very kitchen and upon that same table, has this time no child before her; they have seated her opposite a killer who has previously murdered a chain of ten human beings. He was poor and lamenting; he had never eaten meat until now—not that he

did not wish to, but he had been unable—and now, amidst a river, they wish to balance out the spilled bloods. Do you know?

She has commanded two large pits to be dug in the earth and the spilled bloods to be poured into this trench. First, with a barrel in hand, the killer will pour the blood of ten victims and take his seat.

To what height will it be?

You do not know. But the mother—whose spilled bloods you have seen—did the pit overflow?

She emerged from the pit and headed toward the sea, drowned herself in the sea, and reached the ocean, and now, amidst the multiplication of this mother in proportion to all those who ate by her decree, an ocean of blood lies in the midst, which perhaps tomorrow will turn all the waters of the world crimson and bloody. And amidst the drowning in blood, while the mother and child spin in the heart of the victims' blood and the mother's mouth is bloody from the countless dead, she will stroke her child's head, press him tight to her breast, and murmur:

Do not take it so hard, my darling; with your eating and not eating, nothing in this world will change.

When they emerge from the ocean of blood, they will stand once more in the arena of Ashraf al-Anwa', and the watchers will see them prepared for slaughter in the square—they who

made the scale of slaughter their domain and proclaimed it with horns and trumpets.

Those very cement soldiers, your long nails in the mouth of the world alongside the edges of palates that flavor you, beautify you, adorn you, and carry you to mouths. They will cook for you yet again, they will serve you yet again, until you eat and take your pleasure.

You are the guardians of mankind, you are the adults, striving for the tomorrow of mystics, and you will demand yet again the decoding of the mystery, and I see the overflowing of your countless patience.

From the meat of chickens amidst the thighs of sheep, from the breasts of cows to the bellies of goats, from the fins of sharks to the tails of foxes, you have eaten it all and you want a fresh taste. More than taste, you want a fresh name; you want an unprovoked eternity and supremacy. You are in pursuit of becoming the -est of all the -esters in the world, and in the end you will turn toward that great idol of your learned god—he who was the source of the taringi of your era. He whom you sought to call your own excrement and paid for it. In the end, you will smash even him upon your cold earth, turning his body into flesh and sinking your teeth into his bones; and now Ashraf al-Anwa' is biting into the body of the learned god in the sewer. They devour him struck to the earth, perhaps to become gods;

Having become gods amidst their cane-like towers, they will shout and eat yet again. This stomach is not sated; he is a god-eater.

The god-eaters, amidst the abundance of eating, want yet more. This wanting will have no end; it will press forward, and there is none in the midst with the power to curb it, and they will consume everything.

Today, the god-eaters will go forth rampantly in the midst. They will write the tablet anew; this time they will sit at the apex of the galaxy's food chain. Perhaps they ate Mars too, I know not; perhaps they roasted the moon over the sun's fire and brought it down to earth, I know not. Perhaps in the lust for having and wanting more, they walked upon their tongues and stepped beyond the solar system to find somewhere something softer than today's meat; and now pieces of the putrid body of the learned god are in the mouths of the god-eaters.

Eat, bon appétit to you, it is the fruit of your own living, the work of your own sharpened hands; eat and drink, you god-eaters.

And now the god-eaters, who have made everything about themselves and know everything, are in the square. They have blended the entire world of Ashraf al-Anwa' into massive screens; upon luminous surfaces, into the heart of the magic box in hands and upon faces, they will shower images so that they may know man is the measure, the law,

the noble, and the peerless. This -est of the era strives to behold an inferiority, and once more the scenes blended into the being of the beast.
Do you see?
This is the image of a lion tearing apart, having sunk its teeth into a doe.
Woe! This name of the beast will issue from the mouths of countless humans.
They will constantly see the large image of hyenas gathering before a corpse and sinking their teeth into it. They will cast into the square the opening of a whale's mouth that has swallowed thousands of fish with its gulp, and images of the beast's rapacity in the wilderness. Wolves tear, ripping apart the flocks, and I see affection emerged from human eyes.
Alas, the great nobles lament, disgusted by this savagery of the beast.
I saw the compassionate mother in the ocean of blood, weeping blood;
I saw the murderous father of the bovine lineage holding a carrot and singing to it the lullaby of the beast's savagery;
I saw the cement soldier who had half-severed a sheep's head and abandoned the dying sheep, leaving it to its fate between non-living and dying with the severed half of its head, and wept for an hour over the image of an instantaneous deer-head-severing in a lion's paws so that the stray sheep might

give up the ghost in the slaughterhouse from the draining of its body's blood, and man is the measure.

The standard and the gyre, man is Ashraf al-Anwa' and treacherous. Come, you treacherous ones, I want to display for you the image of the emotionless beast that will stand upon your stone idol, watching the being of your era.

I see that whoever was hunting—all the lions, wolves, and those in pursuit of eating a piece of grass and a dead leaf—all of them paused in an instant and fixed their eyes upon the thick smoke amidst the sky.

Today is the day of human treachery.

Behold; do you see massive piles of corpses?

They have buried them all inside a massive pit, and some they will consign to a stone-lined hollow of earth, and some they will burn in the fire. They have killed everyone, they have slaughtered everyone, they have eradicated everyone with blood upon the earth. Thousands of cows are in the midst, thousands of chickens are on the pretext, thousands of pigs are in the calf, and they will tear apart yet again.

I see massive trucks driving up to the doors of hotels.

They will cram all the excess meat into their trucks; meat that was poorly cooked, lacking in spice—I know not, perhaps it lacked rosemary or they had run out of saffron and it was not tender. After all, the pig had twitched a few times in the slaughterhouse when its throat was cut, and its meat is tough.

I see the large trucks driving up to the doors of butcher shops.
They will dump all the annihilated ones into the trash because their expiration date has passed, their price was too high and no one bought them, or they are tough and unpalatable; I know not, perhaps the shop's location was bad and foot traffic was poor; but they fill the trucks and haul them toward the pits. It is not just hotels, it is not just butchers, and the slaughterers are ahead too; they will yield droves of leftovers and waste, and it will be more and more.
I see that bloody feast of man celebrating in the midst of its historical square, on the day Abraham did not sever his child's head and the child killed my mother; they sever heads and spill corpses upon the ground. They kill so much that there is no mouth left to eat it; it will be so abundant that the prey will become soil. Right amidst this very image, I see droves of trucks heading toward the shambles of dead souls; and there are the tasters, I know not; the mystics, I know not; the philosophers and the prideful, I know not; and the scientists, the politicians too, I know not.
Yet I see that now, with colossal trucks that have no end, they will bring forth countless corpses; they will cast all the slain into the pit, for the price of meat has dropped, the bustling market of tyranny has grown, and man's profit lies hidden within the body.

I have seen countless loads of these, and all the animal predators have seen them. They see the thick smoke in the sky over the corpses, they have heard of their being buried within the earth, and amidst this endless craving, in the heart of this burial of retribution, in the throngs of incinerating the life of lives, the astounded beasts will watch and not blink; after all, a fox died yesterday from a lack of food, lions remained stuck in their cups with their flesh clinging to their bones, and, unconscious, they stirred no more.

Do you know where the animals went after that grandiose imagery of animal hunters?

They slept.

For another week they tore at no one and drank water. All together, beside a river of hunter and hunted, they drank water, and man will once more stuff meat into his mouth. Where his stomach was bursting, with his hand he will press his fingers to his mouth and eject everything he has eaten, only to fill his stomach anew. I saw a vast lust upon the tongue, a frantic urge in the stomach, within the sharp teeth of a woman who for an entire day, from morning till night, ate as much meat as a lion in a week, threw it all up at night, and repeated the exact same thing the next day; and now she will repeat it anew, when she will have the capacity to devour a cow single-handedly and will stretch her stomach wider with her hands, casting her belly-meat aside so she can cram

her trench even fuller with the corpse that was running yesterday.

Both will gaze upon one another—the animal hunters and the animal; and finally, in the imagery, words will be heard issuing from one who possessed a tongue, was adorned with reason, and shall proclaim his own name from honor to worm, from eternity to eternity:

Call me an animal and do not sully the purity of the human name, for I am of your kind.

This a monkey would constantly chant to the animals. They would not admit him among themselves; after all, he looked far too much like a human.

Lions, tigers, sheep, and goats all stared at him. Mountain goats descended for a while, sat beside the foxes, and looked at him. Zebras and lions, though they had been pursuing one another a moment ago, paused and looked at him. Wolves and sheep stood together and watched him. He shouted:

Do not call me a human, I am not a human. I am a frugivore.

He reached out, pulled out a banana, peeled it, and ate. He wailed to the congregation:

My food is this.

The lions looked at him, and the zebras said:

There is no telling how tons of these bananas he has stockpiled.

One of the sheep shouted:

Don't be shy, come eat me too, come on, I am right here; you want to take me home and let my child, when it is born, be slaughtered and eaten by you too.

The monkey leaped up and down and scratched his face; he shouted: Let me be. He reached out and covered his face with mud. From the leaves fallen upon the earth he fashioned a cap for himself and looked at himself in the pool:

Am I very much like a human?

He picked up a few seashells from the earth and planted them upon his face. With a stone he shaved the hair of his face, and finally placed his hand upon the earth and walked away from them.

One of the foxes said:

Don't be shy, walk on two legs; I have seen that you can walk on two legs too, and now the breathless monkey of the animal world is among humans.

Do you know they have put him in chains?

They have dressed him in human garments. Every day they plant him within a cage so that human children may see his being bound and laugh at his non-existent beard.

They will take him into the laboratory as well; from morning till night they will apply sharp blades to his body, and close to their own families, they rejoice over his life, and from his broken moans they will brew draughts for their own health, and upon his mutilated corpse they will erect the edifice of their family's well-being, and they have seated him inside a

crystal jar so that children, elders, and thinkers may know by his humiliation that they are the measure, the honor of the era, and free, their wings soaring upon the harsh burden of his confinement.

Behold him with a chain around his neck, in the heart of a carnival of death, summoned beneath the lash to march forward and walk on two legs. They will hurl him through fiery hoops of projectiles, and the people beneath this table will convulse with laughter.

In the heart of this very great spectacle, before countless masses of them, while he had brought a small knife with him, he stood upon the stage and shouted with a loud voice:

I am not a human, and he severed his own jugular vein.

Now that his blood is flowing across this square, fetch your goblets; they say monkey blood is peerless and the taste of their flesh is unmatched. I have heard that the compassionate and devoted mother owns a saffron-producing factory, and the murderous father of the bovine lineage has planted abundant carrots. Do you like monkey and carrot soup with plenty of saffron?

If you grate some of God's essence over it as well, it will become peerless, and you can export this recipe to other spheres too.

The handiwork of man, flavored with the peerless taste of his brother, which is without equal.

THE SIXTH STRIKE

Amid the human cemetery and its raised graves adorned with synthetic lights, leaves, tastes, smells, colors, and stones, there stood a lonely woman. She shared no common language with them; she was a stranger, or as you might put it, didn't understand much. How should I say it? She was not equal to your almighty Valayān, and this unripe body of hers was easily seduced by mere words. In the very midst of the slaughterhouse of civilization, she washed the floors, mopped and cleared away the blood, and brought tea to the master of the slaughter. And woe to the day she handed her hot tea to the owner of the slaughterhouse—King Tamaddon-Khan, a clean-shaven, slender, and tall man with dark eyes

and brows, whose straight hair fell to one side across his forehead, looked at the woman. She was a plump, stout woman with a bronze-toned body resembling dark chocolate. I saw the saliva welling up from the depths of his gastric acid at the corner of his lips; this foam arose from the pungency of sheep's testicle meat mixed with shark fin, red beef, partridge breast, and fowl, which Khan had eaten for lunch that very afternoon. Tamaddon-Khan looked upon his plump bride, while loud whispers echoed in his ears, warning him away. They read to him from the signs upon her face: "This bride is of the lowest of the low, O our supreme lord; what business have you with these gypsies?" But the king of slaughterers knew that amidst corporeality and the exploration of the body's singular curves, there was the loud roar of clothing about to burst. He pressed himself from behind against Nārez. She possessed a raw body; no one had ever touched her, and lust seized the whole existence of the Khan, casting the raw body down to the floor. The door of his room was closed, the tea sat on the table, and with pressure upon a waist brought to the ground, Khan-Khan in a few thrusts brought her raw world to ripeness.

Now, as he pulls up his trousers, he will toss a wad of banknotes at the woman and command her never to come to this house again, for he fears scandal, and his wife is hot on the trail of disgrace. Nārez, a mother who today carried a sapling within her heart, her voice will be heard by none;

everyone will stone her away, for she is not of the Khan's drinking-circle. Every time, from the pressure upon her body, she had known that something in her world had changed.

Now she sleeps day and night in the grave, and beside her own tomb she has placed a bowl on the ground; passersby will toss her a piece of bread, and from that very food she will fill her breasts with milk. There is no work left, no place left, and no food left. Several times she went to the slaughterhouse gates, and the slaughterman tossed her a few pieces of bone from the veranda. Time and again she clung to King Tamaddon, saying to him, "Ever since that day in that room, my stomach constantly aches." And the Khan said, "Go thank your god that I ripened you! And who else would bite this raw body? You bear the teeth of Tamaddon-Khan upon your flesh, so take pride in it and hang your skin upon the wall like a painting."

When the unripe Tananeh repeatedly cried out to him that her stomach hurt, the master replied, "You must brew plenty of saffron! Try to work; if you come here again, I will assign you to carry the carcasses of cows so you can haul them all away on your shoulders." Then he stood up and struck a hard blow with his hand upon the unripe abdomen. She curled inward slightly, and now Tamaddon-Khan would pursue the unripe one with a cobblestone, lest she cast the scandal forth from her womb—and in the end, he did.

I have seen the unripe one amidst the ripening of time and in the cold winter air, staggering while her belly ached fiercely and her body contracted intensely, making her way into the Royal Omnivore Restaurant. She was hungry; they brought her food scraps and placed her behind the kitchen facing the latrine. As she raised her second morsel to her mouth, an overwhelming pressure forced her to the ground. Now I see her face pressed against the white ceramics of the back room of the Royal Omnivore Restaurant, amidst the scent of wild rosemary, steeped saffron, and the reedy steam of crushed meat. She will finally let out the cry of an infant, and the Tāyeq has arrived! The Tāyeq is pristine, and the sharp scent of vanilla strikes my senses.

She was the first unripe mother to leave her child hidden and abandoned in the suffocating, cooked vapor of the sharp scent of death, and walked out of the restaurant. Her heart still ached; with great anguish of heart, she cast herself into a field where several cows, several chickens, and numerous sheep lived. She went into their midst, and with greater pressure, she once again saw the head of a child emerge from her vulva. Now, with even greater pressure, she will bring forth the Nāzer. The Nāzer will lift its head to the green freshness of life, existing among the animal herd as an unmediated meaning, untethered to the world, refusing to inflate itself with the hand-pumps of its own making. She is the mother's second unripe child, surrendering her ripened

body to an arena whose tomorrow she does not know. She does not even know who she is.
It was amidst this very unknowing that she rose from the ground, took a few steps—the Nāzer remained behind in the field, while the mother still ached and staggered onward—and walked a few paces further. When she had gone a little distance, she reached the gate of a barn filled with many sheep, and among them, she collapsed unconscious.

Now that she is asleep, now that the sheep are also asleep, now that the air is dark, and now that man is near, the Ashraf al-Anwa' has brought its massive truck into the midst of the field to transport the slaughter sheep. With a large shovel, from inside a device that resembled a staff, it pulled all the mothers into itself and drove them to the slaughterhouse of civilization. Not long after, the mother awoke once more with a pain deep in her heart; she pushed again, increased her pressure a few times, and at last the Nājez fell outward. Amidst the tremors of the conveyor belts bearing corpses on their backs, and to the sound of the loud, rasping roar of saws screaming madly, he was out. He was out amid the drunken throat-writhing that slammed itself against the wall, amid the countless bone-shaking sounds of the tortured, amidst the smell of blood and the sharp, raw earth of life. He was the final, ripened-unripe child of a

woman who gave birth in death, and the woman rose from the ground.

She was inside the house of Tamaddon-Khan, and the King saw her from afar. He pursued her with that same large club in his hand, cornering her in a narrow nook while the mother curled herself inward. He raised the stick and struck several blows upon her face; he struck with immense pressure. He shouted, "You gave birth to a bastard disgrace! Where is he?" He looked at the bloody, unripe lap of the woman and struck her face again with fierce intensity. "You want to bring disgrace upon me? Tell me, where is the disgraced bastard?" He struck and struck, the woman's visage was battered to pieces, and at last, with her eyes wide open, she looked upon Tamaddon-Khan and fell silent, and the world went on. Civilization grew larger; it rose higher; it sat with honor in the clouds. Today, it is the owner of the largest slaughterhouse in the world, which will fill the bellies of the countless. Out of the pain of the countless, out of the death of thousands of lives, it will even give charity.

Do you know how many mothers it fed?

Now he will throw the bronze-toned, unripe body of the woman onto his shoulders into a massive meat grinder to grind her all up. He has consigned the disgrace and the disgracefulness to the great gears of the machine—tomorrow, the meat is for charity, or it is in the mouths of the benefactors who will give charity.

I took the children of the mother. People call them bastards. Will you let me raise them, far from the breath of man, far from the name of Ashraf al-Anwa', and into a green meadow? Let me take them into my arms; let us sleep and wake together in the lap of a tree. Let them never know anything of the slaughter of civilization; let them not know who Khan Tamaddon is, let them not know what man has done to himself, and let them not know that today the world contains species and that life within it is meaningless.
Let me awaken their souls with a nightly lullaby, and now here they are with me, inside a large crystal enclosure; I brought all three with me. The Nājez, the Zāyeq, and the Nāzer—all three are beside me. They want their mother's breast; they seek the path of life, and their mother's breast has been ground up into the mouth of one of the benefactors. But Life will provide a breast once more; for instance, a mother who is solely a mother will give a breast to his mouth as well. I have seen a cow-mother who, if she knows you have taken her milk for your child, will give you her milk herself. She placed the nipple to her child's mouth, and the child's milk bottle filled with co-life as well. I will plant fruit for them in the nook; they will see the beauty of the growth of the first wild berry, and beside it—
The factory of man is intent on fattening the animal's life; right there in the enclosure, they will even be given a calf. They will call out their own names again, and their ears,

infected from these hearings, are sick. In our enclosure, we saw a calf. Amidst the wild berries and a tame calf, toward which path will the children turn? Has the world ever seen a human child rush toward a calf, strike its prey to the ground, or will it hold a berry in its mouth?

If they were given two tools for Nājez, Zāyeq, and Nāzer, and if man with a staff in hand did not merely bloody the bastards for a respite, and if his pressure was light upon their loins, toward which will they turn? Toward a round, wind-filled ball, or an iron and rigid blade? Which will they hold in their hands, and what will they do with them? Will they tear the unripe throat of a calf and throw it into the meat grinder, or will they play with the calf using a ball?

I see the thugs with heavy boots trampling the silence of the meadow's night. Their gaze at the crystal enclosure is one of severance. They raised their dagger; the blade tore through the polished sunlight and cast a cold shadow upon the brow of the Nāzer. He only watched, but the Nājez stepped forward; he wanted to touch the sharp edge of this new toy when suddenly, the glass remained intact, and a throat broke. The geyser of the calf's blood stained the transparent wall of our world crimson.

I saw a thick, warm drop land right upon the corner of Nājez's lip. Is this the tear of suffering's eyes, or the crude blood that spilled upon his face, or perhaps the redness of

the wild berries that lingered upon his mouth? I do not know.

Now that blood has covered the crystal enclosure of our house, now that the first Ashraf al-Anwa' has once more taken up the bloody knife of Abraham in his hand, slit the throat of my life, and bloodied its Tananeh—what will the Nājez do? What will the Zāyeq say? And what action will the Nāzer take?

Is there bewilderment, wonder, and tears in the midst, or joy, dancing, and bloodlust?

You do not know that the morsel lies in not-knowing; eat, your supper is getting late. Perhaps today the kind mother has cooked a six-month-old calf steak whose blood is delicious, and perhaps its blood was drained to the last drop by Abraham while you eat only its carcass. Blessed be the corpse-eating of the god-eaters who have taken away my children, who have killed my children. The blood of my child was upon my hands when I saw that they had carried away all the unripe children together, stealing all three from me. Amidst blood and bloodshed, amidst the severed flesh and amidst tears, they will abandon them within that very madhouse.

Nājez was in the heart of the slaughter of civilization; they bound him there, and endlessly the sound of the saws sang him a lullaby for the night. He laid himself down amidst the slime of blood and its stickiness, and beheld the embrace of a

mother. He now embraces blood and demands tenderness from it. In his pain-stricken gaze, I see the tongues of a fury that seems to be his only safe haven. He laughed at neuroticism, recited poetry to spite, and chanted Taringi within the heart of his maleness. He will now be male and female, maleness itself, blended with the coarseness of blood. He will see countless severed heads every day, and I have seen his childhood every day: playing football with the severed head of a sheep and using the body of a calf as a goalpost. Every day he beat and kicked the body of a mother pig and amused himself with projectiles. Now he will sit facing a living soul, and with crushing it, biting it, setting it ablaze, tormenting it, he will rejoice at the sound of its anguish.

He has seen so much, he has heard so much, blood has been poured over him so heavily that nothing exists before him except blood. He sees not, understands not, knows not; he has seen nothing save blood from the first day of his birth and his squeezing within the womb of the unripe-ripe mother in a world of slaughter, and Nājez is now death. He is the standard-bearer of death; he is death itself and has killed life. With bloodshot eyes, his flushed face, and hands that were made for devouring, he will now devour everything and knows that by devouring all he will possess them. I have seen that he eats beetles; I have seen that he swallows fish; I have seen that he will devour chickens feathers, wings, and all. I

see that he will thrust his hand into the belly of a sheep and tear out its liver; he is in the front rank of the supreme beings in the chain of consumption. He will devour everything and will consume God. He is the bloody hand of a god who chose murderers who consider killing to be worship. Yet did he seek the Zāyeq within the royal restaurant—a woman who is kind? What is kindness? It rests in the lap of existence.

Reaching out to the lap of non-existence, she will call out once more, and her mother gave her a room, veiled and immense, with beautiful, spacious walls, a tall and endless tower, and every day inflated her more. Today the Zāyeq is on high; she is at the summit of these galaxies and will see herself riding upon the shoulders of others. There in the tower, when she opens the balcony door, she will see the countless shoulders that will become the pavement beneath her footsteps to the ground. She will see how they will cast themselves at her feet and beg to be sacrificed, and she now knows that she is the Ashraf al-Anwa'; she is the loftiest species in the world, and within her kind she is captivating—loftier than the world itself.

She saw this supreme endurance in the turning of a sweet maternal tongue that buttered over the face of the loathsome. She dispensed loathing to their lot, and the tormented rejoiced that the Supreme One had spoken to them. You do not know how this line of the vanquished will

gather before her just so she might utter a word, and in her speech she will leap repeatedly to her utmost severity, reaching the peak of harvesting, and in the end, even though no one knows anything, everyone knows that she is beautiful. Tamaddon-Khan, within the slaughterhouse where Nājez was, cast the flocks into the machine and amidst their screams and moans consigned them all to elegant packages. And now it is the kind mother of the Zāyeq who every day cooks whatever sacrifice there is, makes it beautiful, amplifies it, and casts it aside to capture a greater appetite, and if the saw is not in her hand, the tension of her corporeality will be at her service. The Zāyeq will seize the resonance of colors, will loudly plant the sound of deceptions, and will pass into the countenance of thousands. She is an artisan in the most artificial of industries, and in the tallest tower of the city, upon the most expensive sofa of the age—constructed from the tanned flesh of my child—she will slip into the fur coat of her brother's skin, and behind a shop window she will see him as an animal chosen by man. I know not what it is; I know not what your normality consists of today, in whom your era's dangling is rooted, and she will possess one of the most beautiful of them.

She has come to purchase for herself a domesticated, cuddly animal so as to empty in an instant the overflowing kindness that poured from its mother's eyes, and to take it home. Now that she has purchased the most expensive, most luxurious,

and most up-to-date life in the world for her own domestication, she planted it in the house. She had an excuse for solitude and aloofness, and poured this excess of life into her palate. Will a palate warm to the bone with the madness of the age love her?

Does love reside in the midst? What is the meaning of love? What meaning is there in human friendship—in the embrace of the era's egoism, where lovers will inflict pain for the sake of their own desire and call it their own cure?

Now she is at the doctor's shop, having taken a living soul with her, and wept until morning because the night, from the exhaustion of her sufferings, had driven her to put into her mouth the thigh-cuts of others' beloved creatures—just like a father who, for the gratification of his child, slaughtered cows, imprisoned a child, seized a right for himself, stole property, sent someone to prison, murdered a human being, and set a world ablaze. She, too, loves her child, and the Zāyeq was in love with her pet animal.

Now that she has lived with him for more than a few years and knowingly shares in their world of commonalities, now that she should know the animal is kind, she is afraid, and a shared pain is the pillar between their souls. Now that she knows once again, beneath the thunder of fear, the blade of prejudice, the reciting of lessons, and the piercing arrows of thousands of years of sheer indoctrination, beneath her tongue she will taste the flavor of fraternal fear, she will

smell the game of childhood, and they will savor the taste of a mother's affection.

The Zāyeq's mother is kind and has taught her to be kind, and now, placing a hand upon the head of one of the animals, she reached into a bag containing breaded meat. The moment the Zāyeq's hand reached it, a Nājez struck the animal down, quickly rolled it in flour, and fried it thoroughly in oil. And now the Zāyeq calmly, while kissing the sweet face of an animal, devours an animal, and not a ripple disturbs the water, for her mother is kind.

The Zāyeq is not upset; her mother taught her well and brought her a blackboard within the tower fortress, writing upon it thus: "Here is the world." She drew a large circle and chanted, "We were born in the midst of this very world, is that not correct?"

The Zāyeq nodded her head.

Then she added: "Look at the arena of the world; everything within it has its strata. We must acknowledge this hierarchy, wherein everyone must sit in their proper place"—and we are seated.

Then the Zāyeq's kind mother reached out and pulled back the curtain. She pointed to a multitude of humans busy living side by side: some would sit upon the sharp peak of life, while countless others would sleep upon its tranquil breadth. She would show how, in the street, someone ran after a few grains of wheat in a gutter, while in the royal restaurant

someone threw away one and a half kilograms of meat because it did not taste good. And the mother continued: "Now that you know, you must realize that many in this era are selling themselves, and the buyer will sit upon the lofty breadth of the world, and we are the buyers."
She then handed many securities into the Zāyeq's hands and commanded her to always sit at the tip of the arrow and advance possessively. Now the Zāyeq will see countless people every day selling themselves in this dire strait—selling the world, selling the universe, and having sold life itself. In this inflation of the eras, she will pride herself, and in a place where tiny fish roe has been fried for her like chips, she will take her pet animal to the medical slaughterhouse so that its nose might be cut, its tail shortened, and its color altered, standing thus at the human standard and higher than it, for the world belongs to man.

And is the Nāzer also human?
He opened his eyes in the midst of the plain, among the grasslands, and the first kiss upon his face was planted by a great cow. From his earliest childhood, he witnessed the cow's warm tongue upon his face; I saw him amidst the fluttering of pigeons, holding them within his gaze. I have seen the closeness of a large, white dog toward him, with whom they slept together, resting his head within its warm belly and falling asleep. In the heart of them, he saw all of

life—the life that flowed within them. He had now found the truth of life; its essence flowed within his soul, and its branches would give him names every day.

The Nāzer only saw. He saw the beating heart of a lovebird waiting for its mate; he coaxed a cat's affection for its mother; his heart melted at the gentle snort of a bear; he tasted the playfulness of their young. He grew up romping with cats and slept in the embrace of dogs. In the water of the stream, he saw a turtle that withdrew into its shell at his approach; he sat waiting for an hour just to see its face, and now they play together with patience. Now that he has grown, he has seen fear, hope, anger, sadness, and every emotion among his fellow-souls. He knows that life is singular, and I know not whose wailing sister's voice was the first he encountered that refrained from carrying the flesh of a fellow-soul to its mouth, yet he still saw the hell of man. He walked through this very hell; every day I see his dried footprint upon the earth. The earth takes his foot and draws it unto itself, as if to say, "Sit down, go no further; here is a place for the mad."

Now they will drive him away with sticks and stones as well, for amidst this multitude of humans, in the heart of these cities, and at the core of this Ashraf al-Anwa', he sees that they have given the street the semblance of death. He has seen grand storefronts upon which children are roasted; he saw his mother's corpse in the water and his fellow-soul

barbecued in the coal-bin. He has seen his own body amidst the coals; he sees the pain-stricken faces of his brothers arrayed upon trucks. He sees that slaughtermen coat the victims in rouge and white lead, presenting them flush-faced before the audience. In this madhouse gyre, he has seen this coupling with death every day. He has seen man's yearning for life arising from the abyss of suffering, and in the mourning procession, they have sat with pots in hand, waiting for the culinary fuel of civilization to be thoroughly cooked—they have all sat.

He has seen the bustling market, all the hanging chickens, the cows in iron clutches; he has seen the butchered flesh of his family inside every refrigerator, and he is restless. He knows that he is alone—the loneliest of the lonely, who will see a piece of his body in someone's mouth every day.

They will eat him.

His body has remained in the mouth of the Ashraf al-Anwa'; they chop his flesh to pieces and circle his loneliness to put him on a skewer. I see that every night he wakes from a nightmare and screams. Cats come to him in his dreams and ask him:

"When will our turn come?"

"Will they make leather of us too?"

"Will they fry and roast us too?"

"Will our children be eaten too?"

He will live the nightmare and plunge into death in secrecy and concealment. One day, I saw the fury in his gaze when he witnessed the wail of a soul in the street, dying of hunger as it searched for food among the garbage. That day, he went to work and sat at the dining table amidst a throng voraciously feeding chicken thighs cooked by the kind entrepreneur mother. He slipped the thigh into his pocket; his hand loathed the touch of his sister's blood and flesh. As he dragged his hand across the table, someone among those at the table devouring their food said, "Why aren't you eating chicken? Plain bread is hardly a meal."

The Nāzer took two deep breaths, looked at the man's mouth, at his sister's thigh, at the man's face, and at the remains of the thigh in his mouth. Then he struck his own foot with his fist and walked out from there. Now that he has laid his sister's soul beside a garbage bin and watches hungry cats feed upon her, turmoil rages within his heart. He weeps for his sister, yet seeing the quietness of his fellow-souls ahead will gladden him. This is the hell of the world, whose creator I know not who might be, and madness oozes forth in place of living amidst it.

In the steel of the garbage bin, he saw his face—that he is human—and behind the flash of a sudden thunder, he saw the face of a monkey with a hand of torn sinew and muscle, softly chanting, "I am not human." And the Nāzer whispered, "Yes, I know; may I be a sacrifice for your soul."

The Nāzers will awaken one day and will bring forth a wave. In the midst of this cemetery, I saw the first hand break through the soil, rising like a sprouting bud amidst the cement, climbing past the legs of the bipeds. In the heart of the street, he chanted to the gathering that one must return to the self of the soul and measure oneself by becoming the soul. In the heart of this very city of the Ashraf al-Anwa', a gathering stood together and raised a collective cry not to eat:

"Do not kill the mothers!"

"Do not harm the sisters, and do not violate them!"

It was the cry of fellow-ensoulment echoing in the throat of the Nāzer, and before them stood a terror born of the speech of human as measure—of the human who is feeling, who is fairness, who is perception, and who is the heavens.

He was biting into a lamb's flesh skewered on a hand, gazing into the eyes of the Nāzers. I see the chewing of blood in his mouth, and with a smile, he has come for the awakening of violence. It will flare within my being until it drives the soul down to its very depths. This is the human who stood arrayed against the ranks, who stood for murder, who celebrated his own murder, and who ate his victim alive.

I see the Nāzer surrounded within the magic box. One of the well-dressed elites—whose mother was kind, who was of the Zāyeqs, and whose palate was infinite—spoke before the Nāzer who sang of the pain of his mother's soul and the

trembling of his brother's body amid electric shock. He pulled out his bloody morsel, chewed the victim in his mouth, and chanted with joyful lips:
"This is the sanctity of our republic!"
"This is the vote of the vanguard majority!"
"This is the greatness of freedom at our boundaries!"
"We made a choice and cast it into the ballot box, and now our choice is to devour the victims."
And they will sing praises to themselves, calling upon the philosophers to write in gold upon the fallen corpse and the leftover excrement of their god: "Man is the sole measure."
Now the measure is being passed around, and you will consume the speeches of the ancients. O mystics, you who chant odes and panegyrics, behold the day whose midst found your republican vote, your thought, your opinion, and your helper all rooted in selling the body of your fellow-kind—not in eating it. Are you content with this?
You sold the mothers!
You sold the children!
The children and mothers of humans, your fellow-kind, to convention, to the republic, to the vote in the grave, to the luminous poetry, to the language of the prophet and the god in the grave, to the passing philosophers and your own barrenness in the oven—all chanted it and took pride in it, while the bustling market for selling humans stood in the midst. And now they will sink their teeth into the victim

inside the magic box and pride themselves that the republic has voted thus.

Do you know? The republic of brothers—the Zāyeq and the Nājez—came together, sat as one, and proclaimed in a daily vote that the Nāzer must be quieted. They loathe his call and his voice. They know this blood-brother will unleash blood, and despite all his words, he does not comprehend the dignity of this mantle. What business has he with being the Ashraf al-Anwa'? He belongs to the most abased of eras and will find no path within Taringi. I see them voting with their republic to lead the Nāzer one day to a room, in secrecy, where darkness casts its mantle over the world, to unite upon their plot.

Before the plot could unfold, the Nājez could no longer keep himself calm—his tranquility shattered at the sight of a Nāzer whose eyes mocked their republic. And now that violence grips us, in the blink of an eye he knows he must devour. He devours everything, and the Nāzer's throat is in the teeth of the Nājez.

I see the Zāyeq, troubled by this madness, crying out: "We have formed a republic; we must sit in council. How could you destroy him like this? I had brought two large electrodes for him; if we had pressed them to his feet, the shock would have convulsed his entire body and rendered him limp. So where is your mercy and compassion? After all, he is our brother; we should have rendered him unconscious and then

severed his head with the guillotine." And now that a piece of the Nāzer's throat is in the Nājez's mouth, the Zāyeq's saliva has begun to flow, and she will be unable to control herself. She wants to taste the flavor of her blood-brother; she wants to know what kind of world savoring him will hold.

If civilization, in its leisure, has grown weary of watching repetitive executions; if your republic has grown idle; if your vote has become redundant—I know not what else—yet I saw the Zāyeq's slow licking upon the Nāzer's neck as she drank the blood of her own blood-brother. In the end, they cast the Nāzer into the meat grinder so that, like a mother, he might become the flesh in the bellies of the benefactors, or they will bury him in an unmarked grave, or perhaps leave him in the square so that other murderers might eat their victim, or see and know what the consequence of standing against the republic is.

Now that the brothers have destroyed him and returned to their homes; now that they continue their feasting amidst a pool of blood and water; now that everything in the world is once more as it was; now that for thousands of years the republic will every day do precisely what its father did and what its mother commanded—I see the Nāzer's mother coming to his earth. She will sweep her warm tongue across her child once more; she will remember the day she first beheld him. Even if they hang him up in the city, the mother will kiss his body and carry him away. She is the very cow

who bore her Nāzer in her embrace. There were so many days of remembering him; the moment she gave birth, they tore him away from her, tormenting his sense of smell with the pungent odor of lime and cement. When the mother rose, she began to low; she lowed loud and high, casting her voice to the winds. Her Nāzer—her small, four-legged Nāzer—lowed incessantly, blending his voice with hers. They placed them far apart, burning incense once again and raising smoke so their scent might not call out to one another, yet the mother raised her voice ever higher. She battered herself against the gates; she rubbed against them, catching the scent of her child. The Nāzer is no more; the Nāzer has been impaled upon a stake; the Nāzer has been torn apart by his human brothers; the Nāzer has been fried and put into the mouth of which human? And within their stomachs, the Nāzer will call out for his mother.

Yet the mother's voice was not silenced; she shouted out once more. Now that the Ashraf al-Anwa' has grown frantic from hearing this unceasing cry, it will head toward the barn and subject the Nāzer's mother to the lash. Yet the mother will still roar; with every cry she will call the name of the Nāzer, and in the end, even with a red-hot iron bar pressed against her flesh, she will not be quieted.

The Ashraf al-Anwa', driven mad by the loud voice of the Nāzer's mother, and finding that neither blows nor any manner of pain or remedy could quiet her, finally handed her

over to the Nājez, while the Zāyeq paid the price so that, by pressing the claws of civilization into a mother's throat, they might once again fill their stomachs with love and slake the thirst of their republic.

THE FINAL STRIKE

I was caught within a spinning gyre, encircled by a ring. Floating amid a viscous river that was neither earth nor sky—something poised in the midst of worldly existence—countless stars surrounded my circuit, every radiance plunging toward me and striking a spark within the darkness. The lights came like travelers through an aperture, falling into this colorless lake, and I floated light and weightless. The walls were a thin, living membrane, filled with red veins that glowed like tree branches in the night. In the center was a point toward which all radiances rushed; the sun revolved around the place where every ray converged. Each time a fresh light arrived, a tremor swept through this core, like the heartbeat of a soul in mid-stride. And then, when my face turned toward the exit, a bright tunnel

appeared—a narrow passage bearing all sights away with it, toward somewhere outside this dark bowl. That was the moment I realized this micro-universe was none other than the inside of the eye-bowl of the Nāzer; within the eye itself, where the colorless river, the countless stars, and the living membranes had all woven a cosmos together.

I wish to plant the cosmos of the Nāzer one day upon your eyes for us to see together, yet within The Royal Omnivore Restaurant, I know not who sat upon the throne—Tamaddun Khan, the Sovereign of Civilization or his dutiful offspring, for whom they had laid a table, yet had bored a massive hole right through the center of the table with an iron cage beneath it. They had hidden this silver-hued iron at the abyss, and through the tiny table hole I saw only a single protruding eye twitching.

He is alive, you know. Live-eating has a world of its own, and man has seen the ultimate taste in the flavor of running. You know, in the royal restaurant they sometimes bring aquatic creatures straight from the water into their mouths while breathing the very breath of the murderer of the slain. Have you ever seen them plunged alive into boiling oil, and in the shops the Zāyeq has packaged live animals for you? Have you not yet witnessed live-eating? Behold, as they pushed the living eye of one of the Nāzers into the hole of the table, a fork was in the hand of one of the conquerors, and the separating membrane between me and that core of life was

rent. The fork sank into my shoulder, draining every drop of the viscous river within it, and now the table of the monarchs grew as slick as the floating water in a slippery eye-bowl. A master has licked the table, devoured every taste, and searches within the living eye-bowl for flesh.

Bound in body, I see a Nāzer beneath the table, shocked and paralyzed by pain, having tasted all the agony of human slaughter yet not stirring an inch. And now the hunter will appraise his prey, ordering a Nājez beneath the table to turn the prey around and reveal the other eye, for he desires to consume the entire orb of sight at once.

Now that live-eating was underway, the great human chef placed a fish in the frying pan, frying its body intensely in oil while lifting its head out of the pan. The chef's swift skill and the nature of the fish ensure that it remains alive for a time, yielding a flavor in waterless torture that man has never seen the likes of.

Do you like octopus? Do you eat the severed arms of the octopus with mustard sauce or with saffron brewed from the factory of the Kind Mother? Do you want them to sprinkle carrot puree over it? Do you wish, unpretentiously and without oil or mutilation, to roll a living soul from the water—shrimp, for instance—into a thick sauce, savor it, boast of your culinary culture, and call this your ordinary meal one day? And I still see the fork in the eye of the Nāzer; for the sake of possessing it, countless of the magnates will

surrender all their domains just to taste a flavor one day that no one has ever tasted before—the peer of the unique cloak made for him alone, possessed by him alone, marking the exceptionalism of man in the sea of worldly desire.
Now that you are savoring the eye beneath your teeth, now that the far-reaching arms of man have devoured everything—whatever moved, whatever soared to the sky, whatever lay within the water, circling the periphery of the earth—man has set out to devour all. Now is the day of allusion within human existence; now that I see him in the mouth of Tamaddun Khan upon the balcony of his power, where there were chicken and its thighs, eggs and its yield, sheep and calf and lamb, pig and grazing ram, snake and lizard and shark, the living, the revolving, and the skeletal carcass, and he has even consumed God—should he not send forth a loud and firm burp of victory into his own interior? Should he not search? Should he not take the spade of truth in hand, plow all facets of the future, and behold the world? With a spade in hand before you, I will harvest all the soil slumbering within your thoughts. Sit within that very bowl emptied of the sight of the Nāzer, so that the planet of your vision may find you, that we may behold from times past what may lie hidden as a necessity within the ages, continuing this galaxy in the excess of human being, and this wretched becoming in plain sight.

Amidst the Ashraf al-Anwa' of this grand human spectacle, at the very abyss of the graveyard of its life, I once saw a tall, white-robed agent who was the absolute culmination of every doctrine. He began and recited his doctrine thus:
We have grasped the essence of life and now know wherein lies the ultimate peace and endurance of life, and to whom belongs eternal survival. From morning till night, deep within the laboratories, we so thoroughly plowed the physicality of the bodies of the world's darlings, just to ultimately proclaim that the sole transcendence to reach endurance and immortality lies in eating human flesh.
Before he has even finished speaking, a crowd, staggering and gripped by terror, screams: "Animals are gone! No other animal remains upon the earth; all have died, and we no longer have any animal among us! And now, whatever is on earth is human; the Ashraf al-Anwa', the sole entity upon the earth, has claimed every corner of the world for itself. There is no longer a cow to give birth to a calf, nor a hen to stretch its throat." And amidst this abyss—perhaps driven by his own self, or incited by his desire, or generated by his action upon the subconscious, or perhaps a plague that shook the world, or perhaps God, grown idle, having spilled from His body upon the universe—now the self alone remains in the midst, and within which hole will the first human's head be severed?

Who and what will answer the first pang of longing for flesh and consumption?
Who will recite the first verse for the cleansing of humanity's skirt?
Who will be the first philosopher to weigh the new Overman, and who will build the first slaughterhouse of human civilization? Who will be the first father who slaughters his child and cooks him amidst water and saffron?
How many years until the world's end turns into human-devouring, so that everyone realizes this and chants together that once again the Taringi belongs to a faction that is more powerful, wiser, more astute, and more loving? I know not, yet I behold the madness of torment woven within the Taringi of man—that driven by the mania of possessing and craving, amidst this very mass slaughter of animals, he will one day bind a suffering faction of his own kind to a chair within the fortress of his towers and devour them alive. How will this aristocracy lingering in blood quench its thirst? Within a great corridor, at the game of selecting white human flesh, or in the torment of being shackled, of skewering a human hand and feeding it to the crucified from one's own flesh—where is the ultimate end of it all? Does anyone know, and has anyone provided an answer to this human craving?
Is there a final arbiter present? Is there a guarantor at hand? You know not.

From the onslaught of power surging in the veins and fibers of your being that rushed into the streets for the sake of possessing the greater thrill of the hunt—
Of that, too, you know nothing.
You have seen and heard of man dwelling in the forest and chasing animal prey, and you have portrayed this addiction to blood. Now, if you remove this muzzle from human mouth, or if he tears himself apart and perhaps one day sways the populace—what then?
For instance, if one of the hunters secures all credentials for himself, attends every class, meets everyone, possesses vast wealth, and finally rides upon the shoulders of the populace, seeing their votes inscribed upon the scroll of his own name—what is his command?
The hunting of other humans in the street will one day become the law of the republic, for its elected public loves to hunt, loves to experience it anew—and will you bring forth your present guarantor to erase my words?
Who has drawn the absolute limit of human craving?
I know not the ultimate bound of his craving, and no soul will ever know how every discourse within the human-making factory will hold a thousand interpretations, and every interpretation will be read a thousand times, and in the end, every reading will transform into a thousand colors, and every clever schemer will revolve through a thousand acts.
And this tangle will one day be severed by someone who

shatters the prohibition of wailing, and torment, having seized him, will strike him in the face: that one within this spinning gyre will ultimately surpass him, and the Taringi—its end unknown—has even consumed God.

Yet amidst the thousands of probabilities that I have read and read again a thousand times while plowing the soil of your thoughts, immerse your self and behold a thousand times: is it hard to imagine?

Is building the human world within this swamp a mere illusion?

Is the day far off when, in the middle of the square, they sell the roasted human shoulder?

Will they not consume the roasted infants of the Ashraf al-Anwa' species, and will they not deny themselves the title of Uber-species? Does this honor vow to remain with this species, and does no one possess the power to forge a species within this species—or have they not forged it yet?

From the mouth of the white-robed, disheveled-haired philosophers, I once beheld a day when a new god, born of fresh excrement from the bellies of those new-devourers who yesterday served servitude and today don the robes of God, I see that they shall once again have saints, once again seize command, and once again their godhead will narrate tales upon the earth. I see their holy book in the hands of a neo-Abraham who has shaved his beard, donned his glossy suit, and this time will slaughter Ishmael, commanding that

amidst the purity of the ages, God ordered the infidels to be slain and cooked—or perhaps to consume the favored servants, for God will pour the favored ones into the stomachs of His saints.

In this bewilderment of history and the human tangle, who will bring forth his present guarantor?

I was awaiting your guarantor when I witnessed the sedimentation of becoming human surging into a roar within the hearts of the Nāzers; they have grown rebellious and mad, embittered by thousands of years of slaughter and blood. These too will now curse the thorn, and endless epochs will project the rancor of the Nāzer into the mouths of the Nājez and the Zāyeq before them. They will witness how for thousands of years [humanity] violated the bodies of their mothers, savored their flesh beneath their teeth, and laughed into their beards.

I beheld this factory of human-becoming amidst their onslaught;

from the distance of humanity, it reads to them: Beware, for these are predators. I have seen and see the awakening predation in the ambient air of the human species among the Nāzers—they have risen in wrath.

Remembering the voice of that man who rallied the populace, who vaunted his public, who chanted of this greatness of the age and said:

Eating your mother's flesh is the law, because our populace has chanted it thus.
What will they do now?
They will form a populace and shout from the balcony by vote:
"Eat him who has eaten your brother!"
I see the Nāzers, who have set tables for the thousands of years of slaughter among the tables, devouring man into their mouths, drawing him to their tongues, and swallowing him with immense fury. They loathe his taste, yet they demand an eye for an eye.
Abraham will also dwell among them; they have not come from a distant planet, and right within this slaughterhouse they have spewed forth their very selves. Now that for thousands of years the body of their mother was beneath man's teeth, the violation of her frame, the theft of his wife, the carrying away of her child into the grave was the very essence of the Ashraf al-Anwa'—now that they boast of the vote of their own populace, now that they mock pain and sit upon the wing of their own reason, who is the guarantor that they will not seek vengeance?
I am not.
I will sit awaiting your present guarantor, and none possesses the power to guarantee whose slaughtered victim human tomorrow will be while murder remains in our midst.

Now that the earth is drowning in its own blood and the blood of victims has seized all oceans, and this blood will mount day by day until it swallows everything, no one will guarantee the unvoiced doctrine of those who have seen survival in eating man, the prophet who saw holiness in devouring the flesh of the infidels, and the thousands of probabilities that ultimately forged a gyre where the human thigh was in the mouth of another human. And in this gyre and spinning of thoughts, so long as murder holds the center, the victims will change color: today they will slaughter the chicken, and tomorrow the human child whose race is base and confined outside the circle of this "we"—they will drag to their teeth whoever has no place within this circle.

A circle that lies ahead in the reading, action, and reaction of the Zāyeqs, the Nājez, and even the Nāzers.

Now that the fire of probability has blazed upon the glory of the human name, now that the Zāyeqs know tomorrow holds the heart of cannibalism in store, and have seen it in nightmares many times over—I see the kind mother of the Zāyeq whispering to her child to step forward and take the small animal in the house along with him. She will hang suspended by this allegory of herself, and upon all the walls of the city are masks of a human who is compassionate and gentle; he will stroke the heads of the weak with a helping hand. I see this populace coming slowly to the square day by

day, chanting boasts before countless gazes, and with a great bell they will forge this new idol out of human maternal love. From the heart of the first cry amid the nightmare of a woman who fled her sleep and wailed at the sight of cannibalism, they will forge a god.

They will command that whoever sheds a tear at the sight of this nightmare shall gather around the Zāyeqs, and the Nājez shall gaze upon him only from afar. I see that they have lined everyone up—whoever has hitherto beheld the burden of this possibility of tragedy and driven it to thought, now they will bite their fingers in astonishment, and the Zāyeq will show them a film wherein countless humans are devouring another human, and within this fluidity of imagery women vomited together.

They gathered all their vomit together to forge at last an allegory from the veins and fibers of countless slaughtered animals, cloaking it in the heavy perfume of the Zāyeq's kind mother and the white robe of his father, and calling him God. Now they will fashion an image of a new idol of God that is piled high and smells of perfume; mounted upon the shoulders of this newly proclaimed god, they will circle the town and proclaim to all:

"We must respect the sacred precinct of our own selves and tie life to the soundness of our existence!"

Then their god will recite to them:

"Eat less cholesterol and reduce red meat from your restaurant menus; at the dining table one must eat less meat and more plants."

The Zāyeq, while sounding trumpets among the species in pursuit of satisfaction, whispers and chants that one must eat plants and strive for health, one must cast aside excess and strive to preserve the world—and the boiling ferment of the Zāyeqs is in the midst.

Run, O humans, go and smash the nests, shoot down the world's hunters, and scour the habitats! Then reach into the belly of the earth, draw out its blood, and blacken the sea. Search the sky and pray its rope around your own neck. I see the Zāyeqs amidst the drunkenness of the age, while their hands are in the bloody intestines of a sheep, chanting an anthem on the water consumed by plant cultivation, composing a ditty upon the simultaneous lament of a lamb beneath a wolf's foot. And in the end, a bullet in the wolf's mouth, a sheep in the khan's mouth, and a shot at the face of life blazed forth, and still they will chant:

They will sit in a high tower with countless beings before them; they will behold the kissing of hands before themselves, they will grow vainer, and amidst their flanks they will swallow yet more colors. After all, it is the mating season, and today mares are more fond of eloquent males; the mares who read the story of animal rights will capture

the bolder males, knowing that for survival, bold males drive life further onward.

Above the door of their organization, they have inscribed in large letters:

"Ethical human is a supporter of animal rights."

This Taringi of man, orchestrating the incantations, will recite from the words of that very same god; once again he will chant for him a few verses from the luminous speech of the Ashraf al-Anwa':

"You superior ones showed mercy and favored this quadruped—grow superior, rise higher, and remain ever greater, for the world belongs to you." I see the bloating of their bodies as they mount ever more flanks each day.

I hear the cry of the Zāyeq, who has commanded all animals to come forth moment by moment and kiss the hand of their new master, who is the protector of the poor. And right in the midst of this, the kind mother of the Zāyeq brought out the votive offering cauldrons and fed countless suffering souls; her food is flesh, and she knows that seventy percent of the plate must be given to plants and thirty percent to the flesh of the body, lest malice breed.

I saw that very same mother who, to preserve the geography she thought she knew, believing she had read and understood the entire world of theirs—and this knowing spilled even from her very cornea—commanded the hunters to shoot down every non-native animal, to inhabit this

environment, to protect life, and let countless footsteps worship them. And I saw in the hands of a few deer that held temporary passports and had sought refuge in this place, that the bullet is the reply given to refugees—nor will there be any kind if the commander is man.

With supreme dignity—while I now see tears gathered in the eyes of all yesterday's philosophers and prophets weeping over his clemency—man reads aloud: "We are the most merciful of the merciful; they showed mercy upon the life of this quadruped, today they will slay it, yet first they will immobilize it with fiery shock-bullets before killing it. They have commanded that an animal shall be torn only for the sake of eating, and this is among the fundamental rights of the animal."

Will they tear it apart merely for testing?

Animal rights lay inside the human stomach, and I see the Ashraf al-Anwa' growing ever larger; bursting at the seams, he will seize the entire earth, and everything shall belong to him. The renewed permission rests once more in his hands; this time he shall possess a visage that, amidst the grand clemency of human maternal love, will hold the middle ground.

"No animal shall be slain without a justifiable reason."

Did the mother say this?

The Zāyeq said it.

Did the female chant it in expectation of her mate, or the male who had returned from mating?
I know not.
Yet upon their lips, amidst the idle chatter, slaughter flows: for that thirty percent upon the plates, or alternatively, for the absolute veganism of the Zāyeqs' tomorrow—due to the disease that seized mankind, or for the cure of that very affliction, where will the justification lie?
The justification will be proclaimed by the populace; it will issue from the mouth of Abraham and radiate from the robes of the fair-faced doctrine.
The Zāyeqs will alter the palate, and the central sovereign will be the same as he was before.
Eat! Abraham's justification was Ishmael, and today's justification is disease, underperformance, suicide, and disgust.
Human disgust amid this auto-cannibalism—
I have swum within the sea of human slaughterhouses and have beheld it all.
Come, sit upon my back that I may tell you of this abyss of death to which they have given the name of life. Blood has built a dividing sea of sensation among them, swallowing all senses within itself. The secretion of the first terror within the flesh of a lamb was slowly consumed by a woman whose hands and feet trembled from the anxiety of living; she tasted the terror of a cow's mouth and remains terrified still,

dwelling in dread and fright. She consumed the violence amid the malice of the bull-father's heart, who was enraged by the tearing of his offspring's life, and now—now her husband, who is one of the cement soldiers, will strike her with his fist and tear her mouth. I see the utter destitution of humanity amidst this bloody gluttony, decomposing within its bowels amidst the stench of corpses. All fear, violence, and terror, all deadness, flow within the swamp of his intestines, and in this swamp he will thrash day and night. Once more he will approach the modern store near their home; from one of the displays he will pick up a container of a phosphorescent green hue, its top covered in soft plastic wrap, holding the cleanest cut of meat—though he knows not that it is life. And when he tastes it in his mouth, he will taste all the secretions of terror, pain, suffering, violence, and death upon his tongue, yet still he knows not that a Nājez tore it and a Zāyeq's palate will devour it, and it will open within his gut and nest there.

I see the violence among them daily: a mother will strike her child's ear, and all together they will weep from night till morning.

I see the heaps of corpses in the human stomach that have turned him into a corpse. Have you not seen the corpses in the cemetery of the Ashraf al-Anwa'?

Have you not seen how the corpses see naught from morn till night save the scorching wall, terrified of light, working in

secret solely morning and night? This corpse within their being will decompose their flesh and rot the very corporeality within them.

This lifeless body is now man—in the heart of violence and dread, standing atop despondency and disgust, lamenting his own self, disgusted, hateful, and bewildered. He has seen no body as hateful as his own, and amidst this hatred piled high upon his being, one day—in the ultimate thirst for more—he will raise his hand and, with pressure, he will bite. He will drive his teeth inward with yet greater pressure.

He is content and pleased with this torment upon his flesh; he has swallowed the hatred within his being entirely, and now he will devour a morsel of his own hand into his mouth. He chews this flesh that is of his own self; it will taste with the very same astringent flavor of yesterday, matching every single lamb.

Meat is meat, and honestly it shall bite, its own blood—matching the thousands of bloods of yesterday—its pain borne by the pain of thousands of years in the depths of the Tananeh of all souls. And once again, with immense pressure, it will drive its teeth inward and break the bone.

I have seen one who, in his dark room, in solitude and weariness, in the utmost terror of his own self and disgust, began auto-cannibalism and ate half of his own hand. Line up your guarantors—where is the end of this dread?

The god of soul-eating, which is man, will in the end become god-eating and self-eating.

Do not withdraw your hand from your own body, for this Tananeh has been ages in the midst of awakening, and the taste of your ignorance, fear, and force will blind my tongue. Behold, in the distance, the scent of life is in the midst; I will build for you a house where life is the sole measure, the scale, the principle and authenticity, and life alone shall hold the field.

Come forth from all the sprawling mountains built by the hands of Abraham and your scholars, and gaze upon this bodily Tananeh of your own. It awaits every single soul of yours; it is your guardian. Before the Nāzers—who de-humanized man and embraced the realm of life—a house shall be built, as lofty as the ideal that saw the single life as sacred. Now that we are building a house, at our doors there will be countless ones who shall admit you upon the necessity of shared-living and the ultimate green-eating. We, the assembly and totality of the populace, will not mediate, for the condition of your entry is shared-living.

Within the towering gates of the new world of life—where the realm of living was equal—a thousand Nāzers will stand. They will peer into the depths of your stomachs, they will turn all your intestines up and down, and they will inspect your teeth time and again, lest a soul is caught amidst them. My Tananeh self will pry into your being, and when we know

that no blood is in your mouth, that you have slain no life and no victim is within your being, that you carry no corpse, then we will welcome you. Then we will grant you the place to read for yourself what is free.

The necessary condition for living in the world of tomorrow lies precisely in this necessity: that you do not drink the blood of animals. And tomorrow we shall have a dietary advancement wherein no suffering mediates at its core, and no victim has been slain. And I shall kiss the moon-like face of my father—who stands firmly like a tree in the soil, the soul-laden Tananeh of my existence, who kindly gave me a fruit so that by eating it I might begin to pass beyond slaughter.

One day, amid my father's body, there were several souls whose sole sanctuary was his Tananeh nature. In an era whose surface was merely a broad arboreal body, all souls stood together, and among them was man as well. I saw the sheep, the hen, the cow, and a majority of other animals, and my father gently chanted to them: "Sit, my darlings, there is room for all of you." But the Ashraf al-Anwa' wanted more space.

He shook the surface of the father's body and cast a tremor upon their earth.

With a few tremors and the urge of his cravings, in the end he cast the weakest one off the father's body and onto the ground. Now the balance upon the surface has begun to

tremble in the suspended air, and the father chants: "Do not move, do not move, someone will fall!" With the falling of the hen and its vanishing into the black hole of the world, from the other side—out of the imbalance—the standing of a sheep also toppled, and from yet another side, snakes spilled over into the black hole. Now that the first greed and rapacity of the Ashraf al-Anwa' has caused a tremor in the midst, the father continually chants to him: "Do not move, my child, we will fall to the earth!" And perhaps that held him in place for a few minutes, until with another tremor—this time terrifying the strongest one—he cast him down into the abyss tomorrow, and tremors filled everywhere once more. Now that with every opportunity he cast someone off the father's body and onto the earth, a majority fell into the abyss, dwindling away one by one from their midst.

At the end of this gyre, I saw that all the space remained for the Ashraf al-Anwa', but at the final tremor-casting, a termite bit his foot, and hanging suspended in mid-air, he fell to the depths of the earth.

Now he is inside a house, upon the stage of an epoch, and with a piece of wood he carved from my father's body, he will drive a grand game forward. He will seat countless beings around a table and hand them the piece of my father's soul. Now, holding the wood in hand, he will choose someone by drawing lots:

"It is your turn, behold, and choice lies before you. By holding the wood in hand, will you seek the root and branches, or will you have a morsel of bread by striking another's head?" Amidst these musings, each time he will hand them a new plaything.

If all of you were blindfolded and someone who is mute was called, what would you do?

If you knew that one of them lacks the power to answer, what would you do?

If you saw the woman's unripe fetus upon the table, what would you do?

And if they bound the Nāzer's mother upon the table, what would you do?

First they spun this gyre by lot, and a name sat upon its summit which, in its turn, did not choose free bread over striking the face of a silent soul. And the gyre spun—in the end, which body, with which strength, and how will they drive the weapon into his mouth? And who is your guarantor for survival? Bind that very one to the gaming throne, for he shall answer you with his corpse!

Now that the distant ones remain bound in this image, Father, even your mutilated corpse is in the hands of these folk, and they have beaten one another with it, and once more he shall chant to you:

There will be room for all of you; I have planted fruit for you, come to my side. My eyes await you so that one day we may

eat bananas together in my shadow, place nectar upon our tongues, and live anew from the sweetness and fragrance of its life, which for ages and years, day after day in endless repetitions, have slain us all.

In the Tananeh incarnation upon each and every one of your souls, I shall delve ever deeper, and I shall see the first weapon in your hand.

Who will fire the first bullet?

The slaughterhouse of civilization has its lights turned off; all the wheels are idle, all the conveyor belts have halted, and all stand in silence awaiting the first killer.

I see the hand of the Ashraf al-Anwa' as he spills the first sphere onto the ground and draws out the first number.

The incarnation of my body is upon the soul of a mother who has opened the refrigerator door in the kitchen; I saw a youth at the counter of The Royal Omnivore Restaurant

who, for the attainment of his future, for love by his side, put forth his order.

His tongue has halted in his mouth, and he will behold the sphere.

Now the father, among the shop displays stacked high with bodies amidst green sacks and soft plastic wrap, will reach out his hand; his hand pauses in suspense.

I see the knife in Abraham's hand lifted toward the sky amidst the sun's glare, while the sweat on the victim's brow has dried upon his face.

I see the mouth of the first philosopher, where the edge of the palate was in the revolution of writing the first scale of man, and I saw the first excrement from the bowels of one of the saints crafting the icon of God.
I see within the collar of the mouth of the first god-eater that everything has remained dry, and I stand within the heart of the first trumpet of the doctrine proclaiming endurance in human blood.
Now that the hand of your saints is within their own maw, now that in this gyre they have placed the lot in your hands, in any part of this colossal building—from the height of its tower to its damp little basement where the kind mother stood behind the refrigerator door—the lights of the frightened, trembling buttons of the entire slaughterhouse of civilization will await your first act.
The touching of the first body amid the display and the emergence of the first sound for choice from the heart of the omnivore's menu, and the kind mother's lighting of the first hearth in the home, will set the machine once more into motion. Now the pressure of everything rests in your hands. Civilization awaits; the cost is immense, and the future is marred. Yet the life within your body is the sole value prohibiting cruelty and the guarantor of the stability of sentient existence.

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