

On Being an

UNHOMELY OTHER

Misbah Ahmad

I had eyes staring at me for how I chose to dress,
My dress gets stares here too and implies that I am repressed.
I was the "other" back at the place I wanted to call my home,
I am the "other" in the streets I now occasionally roam.

The curious looks that followed me there, were full of hate
The blue and green glances here still hesitate.
That was the place I longed to belong and to call my own.
A place of memories, moments, and all that lies beyond

It gave me people I cherish dearly, and it gave me days
That added hope to my darkest night and the gloomy greys.
But it also locked away my freedom, to say it out loud,
all that I believed in covered it with shrouds.
It pushed me to the margins and threatened me to stay,
in silence, constraining all that I ever had to say.

This is the place I am not sure I want to belong
It promises peace and rhymes of a happy song.
It still shies away from the gleaming-colored clothes
I put on our heads and my strong scents of rose
It lets me speak my mind and it lets me be
Whoever I want to, and sets my tongue free
But a part of it still holds itself and is afraid
It seems like it is protecting itself from getting betrayed

As I now stand under the clouds all so soft and white
I see the trains pushing back scenes with all their might
I smell of *brot* and *kaffee* as I stare deep into the sky
I yearn for the fried delights of home and a cup of hot *chai*
I feel homeless here and maybe that's what unites
The two worlds I live in now, the two flickering lights