

[*The Book of Naseeb* has been marketed as a novel but is actually a poem, what I call 'a degraded epic'. It follows the trials of a petty drug dealer as described by his Recording Angels -- the Noble Scribes -- who write his doings in a mixture of Quranic register and Naseeb's almost dyslexic vernacular. Here the protagonist is followed by his Protecting and Recording angels as he tries to complete his heroin deal.]

By the gleem of past drizzle on niht streets.

His lif drifts by as weeping vellum.

And wat is his lif?

A hawl a sardines dat switch direcsiuns, ech one flashing blankly left & rite, yes & no. Eche tyme th creture crosses da rode its world forks off to good n bad. And we wil never find our way bak.

His lif drifts by as weeping velum, *kufic* redlaid an gold.

And da Protectors assume da semblans of Janissary soljers, wiv da baggy pants an *bork* hat; dey march to th drum of *mehter*.

And seventy thozend anjels on seventy thozend ropes hawling da Hell thru Bordsley Green.

Do ye see da street lihts dripping *rahmat* wid dere halos of spun shugar? And da fingers of liht arking from his lashes;

And if hed a lookt up for a sec hed a seen da hart-shaped face of th *Ruh* as a bride, as a bare-armed maiden & lofty tiara & a hen party trailing by; and her bridsmoids song trailing by: *This is the niht fortold in wich the worlds sing out; & for love of him the skys are turning;*

But yer slave dint see none of it, burning dan his corridors a woe.

And wen he wakes his feet a taken him to the old taxi place basicly, an like the same cuples outside; & it slaps him across a face & he gets a swet on:

Here he is. Same as last time. He cud see th dog runing dan th street n looking bak;

Lookin at the frosted winnders, trying to fink why he shud goo in.

And his thinking, *I ent going back there.*

And hes got the gold brick dust in his bag an all.

But the resturant was saying *Ali hes not in*, & Ali's mobile wern picking up eether.

Befor he reckons, *Wot if hes tryin ta shaft me. I gotta get backup.* An he thinks das what hes cume for.

And th Followers vail his eyes & his stinging fice.

And sum next manz on th control desk thees days; an baisicly doznt know jack, but he knows Shaka thoh.

And Yer creatur gooz up the tiht creking stars;

waer th standing waves of anjels & of soules ripple in th walls: *Welcum O secret of Quran, Welcum O cherishd frend!*

& in the bare room deres nufin, egcept a creture in her bra & knikers handcuft to the raidiater. And her Protectors dissipated.

We fan into corners ware th dogs did bleed into th florbords.

And the walls of angels sing: I am yor Love, yr solace, the hert yoo strive to pollish;

Da handcufft creture, her rolling eye cud almost see us.

Yr slave he dunt know wha to say he pretends to look aroand for Shaks an says to her: *Orrihite?*

The handcuft creture in her bra & knikers & her cobblid back bent over. And her rolling oye cud almost see us.

And the walls of angels: *You are the mirrer to my imag, yoo are the miraj..*

And he looks in the tilet & rubbish room, coz he dozent know what to say, so he sez to her gormless lik:

-- Have yu seen Shaka? Ja know if Raj is coming?

But hers smackd out of her tree.