

Grey Clouds Loom Above

Grey clouds loom above,
Closing in on Kabul.
Below, a figure draped in a burka,
Struggles beneath the strength of a man.
The Earth, her pit of fate,
Bars on her eyes, dirt on her hands,
Rocks thud against her skull,
Taking away the pain of living.

Rotating blades from the West cut the air of tension,
Pushing back the curtain of darkness,
Bringing peace.
Clear skies cultivate new experiences,
A move from inside to outside.
Burkas radiant in the sunlight,
Neon with floral patterns, her inner beauty revealed,
Comforting her as she steps into her own,
Discovering who she is for herself.

Camouflaged uniforms disappear from view,
Back to the warm embrace of home.
The heart of society bleeds like a ruptured vein,
The sound of death, a knock on every door,
As we traitors clench our jaws,
Praying not to be a part
Of the masterpiece, they call art.
Drugged by their lies, consumed by hope,
We wait, our bodies moulded with trauma.
20 years and a trillion dollars,
Only to have our leaders flee,
And our nation theirs without a fight.

Our country, absorbed in anarchy,
Tidal waves of people lining airports,
Tears glistening their wide-eyed faces
As they are pushed along the burning tarmac,
Praying for a ticket to the future.
Clutching children, they clamber,
As the planes take off amidst the theatre of war,
Leaving behind others to experience more
Wrath, more pain.
Yet somehow holding on to the promises of the powerful.

The white flag flies ferociously
Above a people who tremble
In its shadow.

Inspiration: Alia Haider's *Yaadon Ka Dher (Bundle of Memories)* (2021) and *Diyar-e-Goom (Lost Land)* (2021) as well as the events associated with the Fall of Kabul in 2021

