

تمہارے بدن کا تہوار ختم ہونے کے بعد
سُدھائے ہوئے جانوروں کو
ان کے مالک واپس لے گئے
پیش گوئی کرنے والوں کو
اپنی بات کا معاوضہ مل گیا
ایک خیمے میں آگ لگ گئی
جسے آنسوؤں سے بوجھا دیا گیا
- افضل احمد سید

This photographic work looks at the awakening of desire as situated in places with physical degradation of the landscape; and its title emerges out of Afzal Ahmed Syed's poetry collection by the same name, *Do Zubaanon Mein Sazaa-e-Maut (A Death Sentence in Two Languages)*.

Syed's work carries themes of admissible sexuality, a sense of friction with surroundings, a strong voice of the feminine, glazed with a grief that is at once intimate and public – bringing a sense of fluidity and resonance to a veiled critique that I often call upon. "Violence steps into these poems without much fuss, as if it knows that it belongs there, along with the Ikebana, the salt mine and the first kiss"¹.

In my photographic and film practice, I am interested in studying experiences of privacy and pleasure in spaces, which by tenacity and chance have continued to survive. Also of interest to me are aspects of futility and defeat within the layers of conventional belief systems.

** This work was first developed as a commissioned project by the Goethe Institute, New Delhi for the project titled "Poets translating Poets".*

¹ Annie Zaidi, "The Man Who Invented Poetry," in *Canvas Magazine* (June 1, 2016), <http://www.caravanmagazine.in/reviews-essays/the-man-who-invented-poetry-afzal-ahmed-syed>.