

IF IT'S THE ONLY WAY OUT

*Feel the need to shout.
Hurl your hurt at me;
Let anger tinkle in sparkling shards
If it must
To my feet, to my toes that redden,
My blood a curious rust.
Grow roots into my stone perch.
Come, hang your rage,
Festoon my granite arms.
Don't let this wall dwarf
The omens that show in your eyes;
Climb it and sway
On its treacherous width.
Shake your treetop; float down with
The leaves that waft my way.
Make your hand grow long;
Knight me with your dart—
Draw a bead on my iced heart
With my wrong.*

YOU TOO

*You too
I have had to
Rub out of my morning eyes
Watch as the shadows shift
Speckled dust in stray ray drift
Your whats to my whys
Your truths that are lies
Lying in my dusty corners
The glint of unbrushed teeth
Holey socks on cold feet
Walking down icy streets
Searching for snatches
Of laughter that used to
Sound when all I'd do
Was spin your six digits
Now everything's in bits
And you're missing in patches—
Did you have to,
You too?*

LOVESPEAK

*You are in soft focus
Traipsing elfin down my morning
If your laughter stops being a spring scented storm
I might remember how to be sad
Slowly swishing down a playground slide
Into touch with your grass stroked skin
Orange tang on my tongue
Moulding my language furry with song
Holding my heart on the spill edge of a swing
Time whispering at the tip of a pin
Drop silence in a light glob into my lap
Bend the daylight to just short of snap
Make my morning do cucumber calisthenics
Cool inside like the ringlets of sleep
Exhale breath music on my fingertip reeds
The green brown secrets of a varicose leaf
All its past in autumn thrall
Childwoman, you are*

IMTAZ DHAKER

(!)

*Life creaks by with rheumatic joints.
Can I mimic spring's brief call?
I hang by my fingertips from the fanblades,
Swept around to clocktick pace.
I crawl the lawn and peep through the grass,
Smell the brown beneath.
Raise the glass—
My hair must stay in place.
A year thumbs through the calendar.
Even, like grandmother's picture,
That memory fades.
Open your eyes
And let me fall—
A heap of pencil stubs,
With broken points.*

**Lines to a person who deserves
to be awarded peace**

*Settle upon our world's brow,
Captured sun in cupped palm.
Chart a course into the glow—
Let your veins flow into noontime.
Snatch laughter from our grasp,
And fling it into the wind.
Take us gently in your clasp—
Or our hearts will break in two.
Gather in the sounds of dawn,
And shape them into yellow flowers.
Put music into our everyday song—
Touch our minds with unseen powers.
Don't take the world
To be filled with shadows.
Somewhere in the woods peace lies curled
Waiting to be woken,
Dreaming of nothing more
Than its name being spoken.*

