



STEFFEN HORSTMANN

[Leaves fly from chinars gales are bending now]



Leaves fly from chinars gales are bending now,
Swirl in air with their colors blending now.

Pyres expel floating embers that pulse
In smoke the phoenix is ascending now.

Paisleys form in clouds slashed by knifing winds,
That needles of gold light are mending now.



Caravels are spinning in a maelstrom, hail
Pierces sails sharp gusts are rending now.

You are entranced by light sparkling in clouds
From which the Angels are descending now.

Rain-laced whirlwinds hurtle like trains
In the dark where neem trees are bending now.

Sprigs of lightning pierce saffron clouds
Where the rainbow's colors are blending now.

Begum Akhtar's lips emit visible notes
Of music from a song that is ending now.

from The Diva of Jalsaghar



Couplets by Faiz are inscribed on shrouds
Draped over the tomb of Begum Akhtar.

Shards of light stream from mirrors
That held the image of Begum Akhtar.



The Jamuna's moonlit water shimmers
With the reflection of Begum Akhtar.

Her winged figure rises like an Angel,
Hovering in skies above Shavar.

She sings for the pilgrim praying
On the wind-thrashed road to Kavar.

She sings for the mystic praying
In the golden temple of Danshar.

She sings for the gypsy crossing
A sea of scorched dunes to Shakar.

-As the crystal rain of meteors
Streams over pyres in Marqar.

-As silver rain quells fires
Gallop on plains to Jannar.

-As raindrops glisten like pearls,
Adorning roses in Shannar.

*As moonlight glitters in opaline sand.
As stars fall like grains from God's hand.*

Steffen Horstmann has written more than two hundred ghazals in English, and his poems and book reviews have appeared in publications throughout the world, including *Baltimore Review*, *Free State Review*, *Istanbul Literary Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *Texas Poetry Journal* and *Tiferet*. Horstmann has published two books of ghazals, *Jalsaghar* (2016) and *Ujjain* (2017).