The Cup Reader
from a poem by
Nizaar Qabbani

She sat... with fear in her eyes
contemplating my overturned cup
She said: My son, do not be sad
for love is fated to you,
my son. He dies a martyr
who dies for the debt of the beloved.

I have read... and told many a fortune
but... I have never read...
a cup like your cup.
I have never known... my son,
sorrows... like your sorrows.

Your fate is to pass forever through
the sea of love without sails,
and for your life to be
a book of tears
Your fate is to be forever
imprisoned between water and fire

Despite all of its fires
and despite all of its "priors"(loves)
and despite the sadness which resides
in us night and day
despite the rainy weather & storms,
Love remains, my son
the sweetest of fates, O my son

In your life, my son, is a woman
whose eyes are... may God be praised!
and whose mouth... is drawn like a cluster of grapes,
and whose laugh... is music and flowers
and the mad gypsy hair
travels throughout the whole world
but your sky is stormy,
and your path... is blocked.

For the love of your heart, my son
is asleep ... in a guarded fortress
He who enters her room is lost
He who asks for her hand... he who draws
close to the wall of her garden, is lost.
He who tries to undo her braids,
my son, is lost... lost.

You will look for her, O my son, in every place
You will ask the waves of the sea about her
You will ask the turquoise of the beaches
and you will wander through many a sea
and your tears will pour forth like rivers
and your sadness will grow until it becomes trees

You will return one day, O my son
defeated, broken emotionally,
You will know after the travel of a lifetime
that you chased a thread of smoke
for the love of your heart does not have a land
or a country, or an address
How hard to love a woman, O my son,
without an address