

From the poetry collection *Instructions Within* (Beirut: Al-Farabi, 2008)  
by Ashraf Fayadh  
Translated from the Arabic by Fady Joudah

From the poem "Frida Kahlo's Mustache"

I'll be forced to trick my memory  
and pretend that I have no problem sleeping  
and rip all the remaining questions  
the questions that now justify their search for persuasive answers  
after all punctuation has been dropped  
for purely personal reasons

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The world this morning...resembles my stomach with its ulcers, resembles  
the ache that spends its weekends in my head, resembles  
the heaps of broken glass that fill my memory

The world is no longer alright...since I've stopped worrying about glass

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What's your idea about my days that I usually spend without you?  
about my words that used to rapidly evaporate  
about my heavy pain  
about the knots that had sedimented inside my thorax like dried up algae.  
I forgot to tell you...that in the practical sense of the word  
I've grown used to your absence  
and that my wishes have lost their way to your desires  
and my memory has begun to corrode!  
And that I still chase light, not because I want to see; the dark always frightens  
even when we're used to it!