

All you noble mannequins, you men and women with sever  
Features, remarkable eyes, and teeth like knives, I embrace you.  
You love the misty autumn moon, the summer frangipani, the  
profile of an elegant lover, the evening flight of cranes, the rain  
falling in the sea, and even some of your fellow human beings.  
Good for you!

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I have been told that I will be taken to the centrifuge and the  
press, for the doctors are relentless optimists and believe that by  
heroic measures they will find something of worth inside me.  
Once a week, pitiless agents will collect my tears.

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I have never disdained the house of memory, wherein wait  
such surprises as a row of pointed windows reflecting the sea, a  
mossy stone fist serving as a corbel, a broad-backed old  
woman plunging a hand into a wicker basket full of yellow  
apples, the sound of a loud, deep bell. Renown was won in the  
gutters of mourning, and at noon, love turned into a tiger.

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Somewhere there are gardens where peacocks sing like nightin-  
gales, somewhere there are caravans of separated lovers travel-  
ing to meet each other; there are ruby fires on distant  
mountains, and blue comets that come in spring like sapphires  
in the black sky. If this not so, meet me in the shameful yard,  
and we will plant a gallows tree, and swing like sad pendu-  
lums, never once touching.

*from 'The Etched City', a novel by K.J.Bishop*