

I Opened My Door

—A translation from Uyghur.

I opened my door
in hopes that a girl might come bearing flowers

I took off my clothes
to make sure she could recognize me

I removed the masks
from my two faces, white and black

I rubbed the colors from my smile
brushed the dust off of my sorrows
ripped up
my poems that sang of eternal devotion

Sweeping away all the trash of my heart
I prepared myself to love

October 2009, Khotan

About the poet

Ghojimuhammed Muhemmed was born in 1971 in a village near Guma, in the south of China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. After completing high school, he worked for more than ten years in a cotton garment factory, and since 2005 has worked at the Khotan City Bus Station. Beginning in 1990, his poems have been extensively published in all of the major Uyghur-language literary journals, and he has become widely recognized as one of the leading voices in contemporary Uyghur poetry. His work, in Joshua Freeman's English translation, has appeared in *Asymptote*.

About the translator

Joshua L. Freeman is a PhD candidate at Harvard University, where he studies the literature and history of Central Asia. His poetry translations have appeared in journals including *Crazyhorse*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Asymptote*, *Gulf Coast*, *Words Without Borders*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *Tengritagh*.

