

## Snipers in Karachi

Death is everywhere.  
Also here at a jerry-built stall  
selling vegetables four days old (the trucks  
too frightened to deliver).  
From under onion sacks it scuttles  
steel-plated, shiny; its tail  
slung over, vindictive as a gun.

Panic. Hard-boiled traders  
abandon shops. Screaming women pull high  
all their draperies, exposing knee, thigh.  
In which sack does it silently wait?  
Iron pipes, stones, pound, smash  
until it must lie  
minced into dust.

Not so.

The next day on a bus  
a dozen passengers crumple up.  
On curbs, in doorways, drinking tea...  
death is everywhere.  
Scuttling through traffic it rides  
a shiny steel-plated roar. The gun  
now unslung—and lethal as a sting.

*Maki Kureishi*