

Pepper Sprayed
by Shukri Abu Baker

Inspired by a true incident on 10-28-22

It is hard to breathe when
air frowns and bares its teeth.

I am allergic
to human bites, sensitive
to besiegement. I flap.

I turn red, turn blue, turn white.

I turn on the edge, I see
the stars and choke. I choke
on the invisible
mist of injustice.

I inhale my child's tears.

I feel her lungs drop in
my lap soaked in thirst.

And I shiver. I surrender
my eyes like she did
when she ascended
and never looked back.

And I slowly melt. I melt

into my captor's vision
of justice.

Then when it is harder
to breathe
it is easier to cry.

11-11-2022