Two Stories Down

When he jumped from the balcony, Hasan swam in the air over the Ashur Street Market, arms and legs suspended in a blur above palm hearts and crates of lemons, not realizing just how hard life fights sometimes, how an American soldier would run to his aid there on the sidewalk, trying to make sense of Hasan’s broken legs, his screaming, trying to comfort him with words in an awkward music of stress and care, a soldier he’d startle by stealing the knife from its sheath, the two of them struggling for the blade until the bloodgroove sunk deep and Hasan whispered to him,
Shukran, sadiq, shukran;
Thank you, friend, thank you.