

Raed Anis AL-JISHI

From the collection *Bleeding Gull: Look Feel Fly*

Infant Martyr

Since the night of shooting stars,
the night of travail,
the call to prayer calms me.

Some people chant,
“*Hale Loya.*”

It was the last supper
and the birth
of a certain death.

My silicone
was oxidized with love.

I was born from a pairing
of the dust of Al-Jalil
and the waters of Euphrates
and became
the infant martyr.

Praying

If the core of rising
Is the core of kneeling,
where will I direct
and to what will I surrender
my eyes?

Transfiguration

When the distance to stillness
becomes a ticket for the passenger
and there is no other trip,
the port of transfiguration
is caught in
desertification.

Sound waves
seduce the dreams
and offer the holiday bread
and the flavor of new cotton
while awaiting the holy Eid
On the banks of silence
on the side of absence.

Tunisia

A flower
carried carefully by the wind,
the verses of the petals are
the hymns of the morning.
Time dreams about
the flowing dew of intonation
Like perfume touching her cheeks
turning them green.
That is the dream
and the foam of its flavor
is a spring of fragrance
and freedom.

Turbans

Our cotton
didn't take the sun's side
anymore.
The wrung-out sweat
was not injected inside us
as if a shiver of a poem's smoke.
We are the shaved-off sugar top
And the dreams
In the chaotic era of turbans.

Memory's Lisp

I stand near me
Watching that man
Come from the land far away.
We have the same lisp
In our tongue and in our memory.
He went through me,
And I didn't notice
He stole my poems
And placed a knife
On the edge of my lips.

An Affair

The frozen water
in my eyes,
which was scratched
by a cat of time

is changing the spring
I desire,
my vinegary dreams,
and the songs that love me
into a one-night affair.

Aging Love

The language of love
is spontaneous, like me,
like a painting of a child.
I used to draw my house
on the left side of the paper.
My house was so small,
neither doors nor windows,
On the sands of aging.

Beirut Nights

I am gambling
in the Beirut night.
I need two numbers
melded together.
I never asked any dice
about its color,
where it was made,
or about its birthday
in gambling.
Some games are

red lines of revolutions,
a dot of enlightenment
a calendar of life.

The prisoner

Surrounded by the walls of memory
with no lover
and nothing to remember
I mock
my triangular cuffs
and the illusion
of hands in a circle.
An iron cage of emotions
and a jail of ironic melodies.

Jailed but Free

I roll up.
I smoke the pulse of the minute.
I inject my hand
with heroin of love.
No one can shut me up.
My flying poems
hide themselves
in the pack of hearts,
seeding their poppy seed
in their cells
to grow like my words do,
Drunk and crazy.

My Right

It is my right
to love as she wants it,
to get ripped by desire
when her necklace scatters
the tears of pearls.
It is a riot,
and it is my right
to love and die
the way she wants it.

Religion Is Love

Distances are empty
between us.
Prayers are love,
and when I get drunk
by desire
I forget from which amulet
I wrote myself
using its bloody saffron
and which I use
to erase myself.
Red is another language,
and I can't speak it anymore.

Crucified Languages

In the theater of time
crucified on my language,
watching the birds
falling onto my song,
stealing pieces of bread
from my melody,
what does its meaning
Prepare for me?
The nails of its tones
bleed my rhyming soul
while its hopes shatter my hands,
and my questions are unable
to hammer a dream.

Blindness

Their identikits are a mystery.
I couldn't recognize them
by the reflection
of the wind
Nor by the sensors
On my blind stick.
They walked by me
with sympathy.
"Your son looks like you,"
one of them said,
leaving me
on the pavement of silence.
What does he look like?
Did he like it?
What do I look like?

What is the meaning of the identikits?

Why can't I

have a simple answer

for a simple question?

What is the difference between

white and black?

The Gulls' Chant

I drink

the low-fat morning death.

I begin it by eating dates.

How many times did

the dates immigrate us?

How many times did death strip

the conscience of silence

with the sand locusts ?

Locusts that can't understand

the chant of the gulls

or the whispers

of the sea waves.

Dilmun

And I see peasants

singing along the milky road

alongside a bull

that didn't know

what a plow looks like.

And beggars,
desert sharpeners
like a flock of cheating strings,
bleeding from their wounds
with their long red beards,
hooked noses
and a mass of noise.

The East Gate

Like a dervish
I am flattered by poems, emotions,
spitting the coffee
in the longing coffee.
From the east,
the last gate of escape,
I looked upon us
in the froth.
I saw us
in the reflection
of a young color,
singing the impossible
in the womb of
the angel of extinction.

Masks

I cannot recognize myself
If I don't wear me.
Faces are deceiving
without their masks,
like that bleeding
white gulf.

The Holy Book

In the beginning
love was a gift from God.
Its law melts as words.
Its eve was the tone
of the letters.
Adam was not there
but a sheet containing
the fate of all lovers.

Serving a Smile

We have a modest tradition
of hospitality.
Our Arabian coffee
doesn't need sugar
or cardamom
to be tasty or delightful
just like the smile
we serve
to those passing by.
Imam Hussain

Like a stem cell,
the infant universe
grows inside you,
like a martyr star.
You will get killed
but your light
will live forever.
And like a Sumerian cup,
you will die thirsty
while the rivers of life
will always rise
from your hand.

The Third Eye

There is a holy spot
bher eyes
where angels burn their feathers
And lose their faith.
Do not blame me.

Autism Girls

An autistic girl
searching for the spring
between the black clouds—
her braids are made
from a shining rose branch.
Her dreams are made
from a shining rose.

But who will listen
to the scent?
Her smile
could light the darkness
but one question haunts her.
Why are they saying “her”
when they talk about me?
Have I vanished?!
Have I?
A hush—
then she melts
like a flower in the snow.

Stranger Citizens

They vanished
like our palm trees.
Ancient open windows
and old dreams.
The city forgot their names
while they held its memory
in their soul
like a candle
between prison bars.

Imazigh

I am a Tuareg child.
My blue turban drowns me
in the waves of sadness,
then expels me

like seeds of ivory.
O! great Tin Hinan,
your brave knight
lost his way among
the salt caravans.
The Imazighen are free
No more.

A Summer's Day

Unlike in Shakespeare's verse,
I felt the summer day.
The sun burned
my nocturnal wings
and the wind tossed me away.
My steps on the milky shore,
my feathers in the sky
drawing a Picasso painting,
asking
"What? Who cares?
And why?"

Pregnancy.

My body regularly erupts
and it hurts when it does
but it terrifies me
with its painful time delay.
My legs don't tremble
my back doesn't groan,

and I don't distort my smile
with wailing.
I am used to
that portent
and what it chooses
and what it nominates.

Breast Cancer

My kid is playing nearby
and he stuns me,
how he chooses my right breast
and sucks my age
till it swells.
I try to surprise him
with my left
but he squeezes the nipple
with his hands
and doesn't drink from it.
My child
turns a thousand meanings
in my nipple.
Why is he afraid of the left?
What is it that terrifies him?

English in the original