

Laila Neihoum

Poems

Melting sun

Things fall apart
Tide not turning.
Melting away profoundly
In darkness
The sun.

And I,
Like every other day
A global world-sized wreck
Glaring white,
A hollowed art
Flattened pastures,
Facing an abandoned cave
Where a tear is
The only water
Spilled into
emptiness.

And I
Said to be a big star
Whom night made sunset
Believe in
So What?
A mere light gleam
Where fate
Grins its last laugh?

And I
What if I had not been,
My parent' sculpture
And was expecting my shadow
To change its direction
Running over my euphony
Eclipsing me
Partially
Wholly
And what if I jump over obstacles
In the eclipsed noon

Into darkened sea waves
 To see terror in your
 Blindfolded eyes
 And what if,
 Oh trembling ones,
 I,
 Coming out
 In mid- eclipse,
 Purified my soul of you?

August 1999

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Headquake

 Pain knocks
 My soul's buildings
 Rocks with fragility
 Entomb my best thoughts
 My abundant sentences
 My euphonic language
 Last night's poem
 Under a headache quake.

August 1999

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Staining whiteness

 Writing poetry
 Coerced its octopus tentacles
 Brooking my resistance
 Bringing me back
 Into the beginning
 To write again
 Never mind anything.
 Running merrily
 The letters
 stain
 The paper's whiteness
 Images
 Rhythms
 What poetry is.
 Unconsciously taking

From my hand
From my cheeks
Slipping away
The submission sleeves.

27-1-2000

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Butterflies of Meaning

A poet's horizon
Is filled with butterflies
That's Afaf
And Sakina, sending
her early morning messages
to my sleepy day,
Yussef the nonchalant
do worry at last
when doing the same
but Zeinab helped me
to decide.
Clicking is the decision
then she flew
like a summer cloud
doing what she did.
What about Amal
Clicking her cell phone
Even in dreams
Ringing makes her rush
A beautiful ebony running
With her soul in her mouth
Hello!!!
Lifting the phone
The cell. What I's in there?
listening
a dreamy smile
lightning glows on her lips
this girl loves calling
knows her choices
but naughty Sakina
knows what to send me
knows what gets me to bounce

Like on a trampoline
like grandchildren
Bouncing on our grandma's bed
-I am in Roxi, she says
God!!
What delicious mango juice
A Barbecue smell
Smiley passers-by
In what engulfing happiness
Am I!
Deleting all redundant memories
Am I!!
And how the Nile goes by
Opening its nocturnal maze
Crowded with anchored restaurants,
Cafés,
Pass them and me by
So I remember lovely colors,
Enticing sea smells,
More than happy memories
and Sakina pulling my trembling hand
To cross Sallah Salem Street,
A Highway?
No way Sakina !!
No way!!
Now! Or a flattened death!!
Cross NOW!!
Shouts loudly over the noise.
I run, my eyes closed,
As well as my senses
to Cairo International Book Fair.
So she is in Roxi!
To my memories of colorful fish
Sharm al-sheikh shores
Coral- decorated undersea
A small yacht
Sailing on Tiran's horizon
Passing a private light house
Where I once climbed breathlessly
We wave
I see what others can't see
I adjust my hat's angle
Straining my eyes
Giving myself to the Red Sea breeze
To turquoise waters
To Ahmed's camera seizing the moment
So she is in Roxi
And Afaf's butterflies

Crowding around my thoughts' light
My thoughts that are traveling away
Traveling away.

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[Roxi--a shopping mall in Cairo]

Translated from the Arabic by D. Mohamed Hassan & Laila Neihoum
