

**Gulala NOURI**

POEMS

STONE MUMMY

She is the remains  
                                    of sails  
fought over by cats  
from the tattered ends of tribes.  
Her bleak mast  
dreams of pirates  
that will force out her downfall  
with their gold molars.  
You can't after now  
surprise your solitude with stupor of a knight  
or...  
with what calms the crumbling of earth and heaven  
under your feet.  
Over the years  
you have dug in a valley to bury moons and livers  
because you are mere murk  
or a stone mummy.  
Over the years  
you've trembled at the thought  
of their departure extending beyond  
the reach of witchcraft.  
We know  
you have a sickle with which you spite the stars  
                                    and expertise in stoking fires  
                                    or stealing  
                                    the provisions of innocence.  
But you don't know  
that Lucifer falls at the first flicker of a meteor  
and the souls around  
are balls of ice.

Kirkuk-

**OPTIMISM**

I always told him,  
my friend  
    war is a chain of loss.  
And he says,  
look at my helmet.  
The top of it is lopped off  
yet I still keep my head.

**BLACKNESS**

They have stolen the night.  
I have nothing but the blackness of your heart  
to start a new day.

Iraq-Kirkuk

*Translated from the Arabic by Khaled Mattawa*

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