IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE FEMALE

SOUAD AL-SABAH

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE FEMALE

a complete translation by Dr. 'ABDUL-WĀHID LU'LU'AH

With a complete version of the arabic text

DAR SADER

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OF POETRY AND THE ARABIAN WOMAN

It may be a revelation to the European or American reader to learn that, next to religion, or politics, poetry is the most talked about subject in the Arab world, old or new. A school-child learns that "Poetry is the Deewan of the Arabs", the *deewan* being the parlour, introduced from a non-Arab civilization, where talk about most familiar subjects goes round. Poetry has always been a most familiar subject with the Arabs.

The earliest records of Arabic poetry speak of compositions as early as the fifth century A.D., or perhaps earlier. A century or so before Islam witnessed an annual poetry symposium, where the Arabian tribes gathered for a holy pilgrimage, and a side activity was always an attractive poetry recital, where the winner had his poem inscribed in gold water and suspended on the inner drapes of Holy Ka'ba. There is hardly any similar record in history showing a nation honouring the poet, beside the Greek wreath of laurel; but the laurel, as the English poet Andrew Marvell would put it, is merely "a single herb".

Women were by no means absent from the scene. al-Khansa, Khawla bint al-Azwar, Sukaina bint al-

Husain and numerous women poets had their illustrious roles in the composition and development of Arabic poetry, which the new religion of Islam may have given a twist, but was far from relinquishing that outstanding characteristic of Arabian culture. In the golden age of Abbasid civilization in 8th century Baghdad, the leading poet Abu-Nuwas said "I did not start composing poems until I learned by heart the poetry of fifty women poets, let alone men poets." Coming from the illustrious poet of Haroon al-Rasheed palace, the indication is very significant.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, in that European image of Abbasid Baghdad, Muslim Spain has a wonderful record of women poets. Closer at home, there is hardly an age in Arabian history, dark or otherwise, which does not have more than its fair share of women poets. And the list could prove formidable.

Which brings us to the "modern age" with a jump. In post World War II, Baghdad witnessed what most literary critics consider a "poetic renaissance". That was the work of an Iraqi young woman in her 'twenties, Nazik al-Malā'ika, who, despite controversy, was the first poet in 'modern times' who took a bold step to "liberate" Arabic poetry from "the fetters of metre and rhyme". Those "fetters" were introduced by the Andalusian Arab poets into the nascent Provençal poetry of the Troubadours in the eleventh century, as most decent European critics have indicated.

But Nazik did the wrong thing for the right reason. The right reason being a quest for liberty, a catch-word in postwar Arab world, with a special flavour. She wanted to "free" Arabic poetry of the traditional prosody with its two hemistich line of a set number of feet, forming one of the sixteen metres "methodized" by al-Khaleel of Basra fourteen centuries earlier, and of a monorhyme sticking to the end of each line of the poem, thus introducing a monotonous effect, not without its drawbacks in the hands of less talented poets. Metre and rhyme are "super added ornament" as Wordsworth would put it. Poetry, Nazik thought, was much more than rhyme and metre. Otherwise, one would repeat with Dr. Samuel Johnson:

> I put my hat upon my head, And went into the Strand. And there I met another man, Whose hat was in his hand.

which is no cause for argument. Nor has it ever been, since the pagan Arab poets listened to the Holy Quran for the first time from the lips of Prophet Mohammad. Spellbound, they exclaimed: "This is poetry." They did not need to be told that the words they were listening to did not fall into lines of metre and rhyme.

What Nazik wanted to do was to "liberate" Arabic poetry from 'rigid' rules of metre and rhyme though she kept to both, but in a more relaxed fashion. Hence, it was "wrong" to call this relaxation "free verse". A mistake was made and it stuck in the minds these four decades in Arabic critical writings.

But a step forward it was. And it was taken by a

woman, probably the boldest step taken to modernize Arabic poetry since Abu-Nuwas in 8th century Abbasid Baghdad.

Alongside this formal development of poetry, a more serious development was taking place in the content of Arabic poetry, written in various Arab countries since World War II. The development was found necessary to cater for a growing culture and a preoccupation with the various affairs of the individual on various levels. Hence, the new verse-form devised by Nazik was considered more appropriate to the "new" age than the two hemistich form. The new verse-form and its misnomer were embraced by the avant-garde poets throughout the Arab world. A gratifying number of women poets were among that avant-garde group.

The "free verse" proper found its own adherents in the new developments in that poetic renaissance. The result was a colourful harvest of forms and styles, not failing to attract and please, since the background is so rich in traditional culture, now being grafted with God's plenty of poetic produce in languages as various as there are nations in the world. Translation was the tool, and the 'fifties and 'sixties brought many poetic currents to the attention of the 'modern' Arab poet, not failing to "instruct and please" as John Dryden would have it.

* * *

All this was brewing since the mid 'sixties, if one could set a date for literary developments. Moder-

nization of form and content moved towards Contemporary diction, bordering almost with the vernacular and the very local colour. A very far cry indeed from Wordsworth's plea for a language actually used by men (and women) in actual and everyday life situations. This had many manifestations in the poetic output of the 'seventies and 'eighties, not least significant of which was the political diction of every colour and hue. Social, as well as individual problems, found direct expression in the Arabic poetry of the last two decades. The poetry of Dr. Souad al-Sabāh is one outstanding example of this development.

* * *

In her earlier two anthologies of 1971 and 1982 the poet was moving slowly, but surely, towards "modernity" in poetic sensitivity. A happy blend of traditional and modernistic modes was traceable in her earlier work. But the break with the old modes was to come with her third anthology, Fragments of a Woman (1986) which held up the mirror to the nature of the educated woman in modern Arabia, (and the poet holds a Ph.D. from Surrey University). Coming out of the Gulf of Kuwait like a mermaid, she all but scandalized the traditional male double standard of morality among the Arabs, not excluding a large segment of the intelligentsia. A woman of the uppermost high class, nearly an heiress apparent, commanding more than many a princess in worldly grace and material comfort, a modern Sappho in passionate expression, with a refreshing breath from The Song of Songs... Does she have a footstep on the peak?

Politics, love, society, the innermost feelings of the individual female... all find direct, though fragmentary expression in the poetry of this woman. In the present anthology, the fragments came closer together to take the form of creation : IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE FEMALE. Though echoing the words of St. John, it is not a violation except of the Gospel of the selfimposed sanctity of the Arabian Prince of Light, in centuries devoid of light. This Eve decided to come from under the Tree of Knowledge, calling an apple.. An Apple.

* * *

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE FEMALE is a collection of modern Arabic poems which lend themselves to translation into English with little difficulty. One is always reminded of the Italian Renaissance dictum that translators are traitors, to say the least. But to "render" these poems in English suggests an ambiguous meaning of "rendition" enough to disperse the charge of "treason" - if only for a while. What made my job easier was that only 14 poems out of 97 keep to a degree to traditional metre and rhyme. Hence the academic allurement to provide metre and rhyme in English could be spared. Even in those 14 poems the imagery and felicity of expression helped to cast a rosy cloud over that methodized nature of poetry. This aspect in the poems gave room for a more crystallized expression, almost embracing spoken Arabic, which made the "free verse" poetry proper. And that is a serious point in Arabic criticism. Can the traditionally "non-poetic" spoken Arabic rise to the level of, "poetic language"? I think here it could. Until recently, it was blasphemously non-poetic in Arabic to use words like: passport, V.I.P. lounge, espresso, body-chemistry, territorial waters, autonomous rule, brain-washing, dotting the i's, fast food, air-pockets, Arabian robot, computer, C.I.D. archives... In context, these words have "assumed a poetic meaning". One cannot forget Professor I. A. Richards repeating : "There is no such thing as poetic or unpoetic word. A word is poetic when it occurs in a poetic context". It seems to me that here we have a case in hand.

And what is the "poetic context" pray, or rather "what is poetry"? More than three score years and ten A. E. Housman said in his Clark Lecture in Cambridge : "I cannot say what poetry is anymore than a terrier a rat. We both know the thing when we see it."

January, 1990

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BE MY FRIEND

1

Be my friend. Be my friend. How nice if we could remain friends. Every woman sometimes needs a friendly hand, And kindly talk to hear. A tent of warmth, made up of words And not a storm of kisses. So why, my friend, You care not for my little things Nor for what pleases women ? .

كُنْ صديقي . . .

كُنْ صديقي . كُنْ صديقي . كم جميلٌ لو بقينا اصدقاء إنَّ كلَّ امرأةٍ تحتاجُ أحياناً إلى كفِّ صديقٌ . وكلام طيب تسمعُهُ . . وإلى خيمةٍ دفٍ صُنعَتْ من كلماتْ وإلى خيمةٍ من قُبُلاتْ فلماذا يا صديقي ؟ . لستَ تهتمُّ بأشيائي الصغيرةُ ولماذا . . لسْتَ تهتمُّ بما يُرضي النساء ؟ . .

Be my friend.

Be my friend.

I sometimes need to walk on the grass with you..

And sometimes need to read a book of poems with you..

And, as a woman, it makes me glad to hear you . .

So why, you eastern man, take note of my form only,

Why in my eyes you see the *kohl* *

But cannot see my mind ?.

Just like the soil, I need the dialogue-waters, so

Why the bracelet only round my wrist you see ? .

And why in you remains a trace of Shahrayar?.

^{*} Kohl : antimony - black metallic powder favoured by Arabian women for eye cosmetics.

Be my friend.

Be my friend.

That does not belittle manhood.

But the eastern man cannot accept a role

Except the role of a hero..

So why mix up the cards naïvely ? .

Why claim in love, when you are not ?!.

Every woman on earth needs a voice of intelligence A profound voice,

Needs to sleep on a piano's chest, or on a book ...

So why ignore the cultural points

And turn to points of clothes ? .

* •

Be my friend. Be my friend. I do not seek to be your great love, Nor that you should buy me a yacht; Or give me palaces for gifts Or shower me with French perfumes And give me the keys to the moon.

كُنْ صديقي . كُنْ صديقي . أنا لا أطلبُ أن تعشقني العشقَ الكبيرا . . لا ولا أطلبُ أن تبتاعَ لي يختاً . . وتُهْديني قصورا . . لا ولا أطلبُ أن تُمطرَني عِطراً فَرَنسياً . . وتعطيني مفاتيحَ القَمَرْ

These things bring no happiness to me.. For small are my concerns, My hobbies also, small, And my ambition?. To walk with you For hours, on and on, Under the tuneful rain. And my ambition ?. To hear you on the phone, When I am haunted with sadness, And led to tears with boredom.

هذه الأشياء لا تُسعِدُني . . فاهتماماتي صغيرَهْ وهِواياتي صغيرَهْ وطموحي . . هو أن أمشيَ ساعاتٍ . . وساعاتٍ معكْ . تحت موسيقي المَطَرْ . . وطموحي . هو أن أسمعَ في الهاتفِ صوتَكْ . . عندما يسكُنني الحزنُ . . . وَيُبكيني الضَجَرْ . .

Be my friend. Be my friend. My need is great for a peaceful haven, And I am tired of tales of love, Tired of ages which consider The woman as a marble figure. So, when you meet me, speak up . . Why forgets the eastern man, Who meets a woman, half his speech ? . Why does he not see in her Except a piece of sweets, and pigeons young ? . And why the apples from her orchard Picks, and then he falls asleep ? .

FEMALE 2000

Π

Like all the women of the earth, I could have courted the mirror.

I could have sipped my coffee, In the comfort of my bed. And on the phone could practice chatting, Heeding neither days nor hours.

قد كانَ بوُسْعي .. – مثلَ جميع نساءِ الأرضِ – مُغازِلةُ المِرَآةْ

قد كانَ بوُسْعي ، أن أحتسِيَ القهوةَ في دِفء فراشي وأُمارِسَ ثَرْثَرَتي في الهاتفِ . دونَ شعورٍ ، بالأيامٍ . . . وبالساعاتْ Could have minded my beauty, With the *kohl* round the eyes; And in the manner of a coquette, Roast my body in the sun, And dance, like mermaids, on the waves.

*

قد كانَ بوُسْعي أن أتجمَّلَ أن أتكحَّلَ . . . أن أتدلَّلَ أن أتحمُّصَ تحتَ الشمسِ . وأرقُصَ فوقَ الموجِ كَكُلِّ الحُورّياتْ

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And I could have Twinkled with rubies and turquoise; Could strut, like queens, around. قد كانَ بوُسْعي أن أتشكّلَ بالفيروزِ ، وبالياقوتِ ، وأن أتثنى كالملكاتُ

.

I could've done completely nothing, Could have read completely nothing, Written nothing, only minding Limelights, fashions or the trips. قد كانَ بوُسْعي أن لا أفْعَلَ شيئاً أن لا أقرأ شيئاً أن لا أكتُبَ شيئاً أن أتفرّغَ للأضواءِ . . وللأزياءِ . . وللرَحَلاتْ . I could've chosen Not to reject, Not to rage in anger, nor To scream in face of tragedy.

••

ą.

قد كان بوُسْعي أن لا أرفُضَ أن لا أغْضَبَ أن لا أصْرُخَ في وجهِ المُاساةْ

I could've chosen To swallow my tears, To swallow suppression, And be tamed like women prisoners

قد كانَ بوُسْعي ، أن أبتلعَ الدَّمْعَ وأن أبتلعَ القَمْعَ وأن أتأقلمَ مثلَ جميع المَسْجُوناتْ

I could've chosen to ignore Queries posed by history And self-flogging could avoid.
قد كانَ بوُسْعي أن أتجنَّبَ أسئلةَ التاريخ وأهرُبَ من تعذيبِ الذاتْ And could have chosen to be spared The sigh of all the sorrow-sodden And the cry of all the crushed, The revolt of thousands dead.

قد كانَ بوُسْعي أن أتجنَّبَ آهةَ كلِّ المحزونينَ وصَرْخةً كلّ المسحوقينَ وثورةَ آلاف الأمواتْ . .

But I betrayed the female laws, And chose the facing of the words.

لكنّي خنتُ قوانينَ الأنثى واخترتُ مواجهةَ الكلماتْ . .

III

OH, YOU MORE THAN MY LOVE

Ordinary, All the phrases I could say, About your great love, O my Love. Could there be another word, Not discovered by anyone, That could save me from my plight. O, king of kings O, you more, more than my love! .

.

IV

TO SOMEONE WHO CANNOT BE NAMED

1

I name you

- Though I am sure you can't be named -

"My Love"

I know that languages are all too narrow here for me-

My blouse too narrow;

My bed too narrow,

And all dictionaries in vain,

My letters stained in flame.

I name you - Despite this tribe's protest -

"My Love" And, too, despite that tribe's protest,

2

"My Love"

I know your boundaries have no end, And that your symbols can't be solved, And that to read your eyes is just Like reading of the hidden lore.

2

أُسَمِّيكَ – رَغْمَ احتجاج قُرَيْشٍ – «حبيبي» ورغمَ احتجاج كُلَيْبٍ . . «حبيبي» وأعرف أن حدودَكَ ليست تُحَدُّ وأنَّ رُمُوزَكَ ليست تُحَلُّ وأنَّ قراءةَ عَينيْكَ مثلُ قراءةِ علم الغُيُوبِ . .

•

3

I name you

- So, to spite the women -

"My Love"

- And so, to spite the minds of tin -

"My Love"

I know the tribe will seek my head, And males will brag about my slaughter, And women shall dance Under my cross.

أُسَمّيكَ . . – حتّى أغيظَ النساء – «حبيبي» – وحتى أغيظَ عُقُولَ الصفيحِ – «حبيبي» وأعرفُ أنَّ القبيلةَ تطلبُ رَأْسي وأنَّ الذُكورَ سيفتخرونَ بذبْحي وأنَّ النساءَ . . سيرقُصْنَ تحت صليبي . .

I turned up all dictionaries And was worn out So can you but recall a name A new, A strange, Exciting name That suits my insane love, Except "My Love" ? .

•

V

A MAN BELOW ZERO

O, you present day Hulagu :^{*} Lift off your oppression sword. You are a melancholic man You are tragic, And aggressive. You can see no difference between My blood-and drops of ink.

^{*} Hulagu : Mongol Emperor (1217-65) grandson of Jenkis Khan. He destroyed Baghdad, 1258.

O Hulagu, There is nothing that can join us : Neither matters of the heart, Nor the matters of the mind. You desire the stable land, And I am fiercer than sea-fish. Exercise your killing art, I command the art of patience.

O Hulagu the First, Hulagu the Second, Hulagu Ninety Ninth You can't bring me to Obedience House.* For I am a woman Repulsed by all the banning verbs, Repulsed by all imperatives. Tell me not about your feelings You're the last to deal with poetry. There is nothing that can keep me For your lips are like the thorns, And your bed is like the grave.

^{*} Obedience House : Mainly an Egyptian Islamic institution which forces the wife to the will of her husband.

O, Hulagu Don't be upset with my words, If to you I let this secret : I am in a state of boiling, And you're a man below zero.

يا هولاكُو . . . لا تتضايقْ من كَلِماتي إن أفشيتُ أمامكَ هذا السِّرّْ إَنِّي في حال الغَليانِ ، وإِنَّكَ رِجُلُ تحتَ الصِفرْ . . .

THE ABYSS*

When you madly kiss my mouth, When the abyss looms before me, You remain in love an expert, I, the amateur, for evermore.

^{*} Abyss : Arabic "hawiya" means both "abyss" and "amateur" as feminine adjective.

كلَّما قَبَّلتَ ثغري بجنونٍ كلَّما لاحَتْ أمامي الهاويَّهْ أنتَ تَبقَى في الهوى مُحتَرِفًا وأنا دوماً سأبقى هاويَهْ . .

VII

DIARY OF A CAT

I am in a state of love, my love. It is a blessing rare To open, with the day, my eyes And see beside me someone I can call "my love" A blessing is to sip my coffee in your arms, To dwell all night in a fragrant orchard. And a blessing : when the female feels a man Who can cover and protect her, And unlock the hidden world. In every language of the world: I love you Do you have another name Except "My Love"? .

يوميّات قطّة

أنا في حالة عشق . . . يا حبيبي نِعْمةٌ كُبرى بأنْ أفتحَ عينيَّ صباحاً فأرى في جانبي من أناديهِ «حبيبي» . . يعمةٌ أن أشربَ القهوةَ ما بين ذراعَيْكَ . . وأن أسكُنَ طُولَ الليل في بُسْتانِ طيب . . . ويحميها . . ويُعطيها مفاتيحَ الغُيوب . . أنا في كلِّ لغاتِ الأرضِ أهواكَ . . فهل عندكَ إسْمٌ آخرٌ . .

VIII

WHAT IS LEFT OF YOU ?

1

I do not think of changing you at all. If I could change your wild habits, Then what is left of you? . I do not think of refining you, Or trimming you. If I could trim the reckless child, Which is in you, Then what is left of you? .

ماذا يىقى منكْ ؟ .

1

لستُ أَفكِّرُ في تغييركَ أَبَداً . . لو غيَّرتُ طبائعَكَ الوحْشِيَّةَ ماذا يبقى منكْ ؟ . لستُ أَفكَرُ في تأديبكَ . . أو تهذيبكَ . . فماذا يبقى منكْ ؟ . I do not think of taking you From out your chaos. For if you were to gather all The paper strewn about your bed, Then what is left of you ? . I do not think of teaching you the art of love : Of love you are a prophet. If I could teach you what I know not, Then what is left of you ? .

d'

I do not think ...

Of saving you from that poetic earthquake.

3

If I could save you from that tremor,

Then what is left of you?.

Then what is left of you?.

Then what is left of you?.

لستُ أفكِّرُ . . في إنقاذكَ من زَلْزَال الشِعْر فلو أنقذتُكَ من زَلْزَال الشِّعْرِ فماذا يبقى منكْ ؟ . ماذا يبقى منكْ ؟ . ماذا يبقى منكْ ؟ .

3

IX

A READING IN THE MEMORY OF TREES

Every autumn I walk in the forest To wash my face with rain, These are yellow leaves, And these are red. And those are burning like the flames. I ask myself As I tread on ruby fragments : Are these leaves. . Or these ideas ? . Does the forest know the sadness? . Does it weep, the forest too ? . Does it feel, does it remember Does the forest sense the pain ? . Do the trees their past recall ? .

قراءةً في ذاكرةِ الأشجار

Х

LOVE IN THE OPEN AIR

1

When I am in a state of love . . I feel my weight equals a feather; And that I walk above the clouds And rob the sunlight, Hunt the moons.
حين أكونُ بحالة عشقٍ أشعرُ أنّى صرتُ بوزن الريشَةِ أَنِّي أمشي فوق الغَيْم ِ . . وأسرِقُ ضوءَ الشمس ِ. . وأصْطَادُ الأقمارْ .

When I am in a state of love . . I feel the world is turned my home; That I can pass throughout the sea, And cross a thousand rivers And can go round without a passport, Like the words or like the thoughts.

.

When I feel you are my love,

My fear is gone,

My weakness gone;

Among the women of the earth

I feel the strongest,

And I leave my early complexes behind.

I call your name

In Paris, Lausanne or Milan.

I enter all the cafés of the world,

One after the other.

I tell the roadworks labourers,

I tell the riders on the bus,

I tell the balcony flowers,

And even ants.

I tell the bees

And all the cats along the street :

I am in love.

I am in love.

I am in love.

.

XI

PLANT ME AMONG WORDS

1

.

I greatly fear That this love may become a habit. I greatly fear The dream may burn and all these moments explode. I greatly fear That poetry may reach an end, and all desires choke.

أخشى جدّاً . . أن يتحوَّلَ هذا الحبُّ إلى عاداتْ أخشى جدّاً . . أن يحترقَ الحُلْمُ ، وتَنْفَجِرَ اللَحَظَاتْ أخشى جدّاً . . أن ينتهيَ الشعرُ ، وتختنقَ الرَغَباتْ I greatly fear That no clouds may remain That no rain may remain; That forest trees may not remain. I hope you plant me, then, Among the words

أخشى جدّاً . . أن لا يبقى غيمٌ . . أن لا يبقى مطرّ أن لا تبقى أشجارُ الغاباتْ ولذا . . أرجو أن تَزْرَعَني ما بينَ الكَلِمَاتْ . . .

XII

WOMEN TIME

There is no winter-time for my feelings, Nor a summer time for my desires All the clocks in the world Strike at the same time When it's time for my *rendez-vous* with you; And stop at the same time When you take your coat and leave.

XIII

THE OUTSTANDING

I knew, before I was born, That I shall love you. And after I came to the world, I still love you. The greatest deed I have achieved As a woman, Is that I love you.

المُتَفوِّقة

كنتُ أدري – قبل أن أُولدَ – أنِّي سأُحِبُّكْ . . بعد أن جئتُ إلى العالم . . . ما زلت أحبُّكْ . . إِنَّ مِن أعظم أعمالي التي حقَّقَتُها كامرأةٍ . . . أنتى أُحبُّكْ . . .

.

XIV

CARRYING FOREVER

I carry you, like a female kangaroo, Inside me; And hop with you from tree to tree, From hillock to hillock, From continent to continent. I carry you nine months, Ninety months, Ninety months, Ninety years, And fear to give you birth, For fear that in the forest, I could lose you.

الحَمْلُ الأبديّ

•

XV

NAUGHTY BOY

I am not angry at your anger, Not annoyed with your lightning And thunder, Or your raging storms. I know that all the china you break, All the foolishness you make Are nothing but the preludes To the birth of a poem.

شقاوة أطفال

لا أغضبُ من غَضَبَكْ ولا أتضايقُ من بَرْقكْ ورعدِكْ وجنون عواصفك . إِنَّنِي أعرف أن كلَّ الأواني التي تكسرُها وكلَّ الحماقاتِ التي ترتكبِها لیست سوی مقدّماتْ لولادة القصيدة . .

XVI

ELECTRICITY

At the peak of summer My femininity collides With a little drop of sweat, Trickling on your chest As you approach from the seaside. Then the world is electrified And the rains fall.

•

XVII

UNTRADITIONAL READING

Don't read me from right to left, In the Arabic way; Nor from left to right, In the Latin way; Nor from top to bottom, In the Chinese way. Read me simply As the sun reads the leaves of grass, As the sparrow reads the book of the rose.

قراءة غير تقليدية

XVIII

DEMOCRACY

It is not democracy When a man speaks out his mind on politics, And no one stops him. Democracy is when a woman Speaks out her mind on love, And no one kills her.

•

XIX

THE HIGHEST TREE IN THE WORLD

When I was a child, I used to think the tree The highest place in the world. When I became a woman, And climbed over your shoulders, I learned that you are higher than all trees; And that sleeping in your arms Is delicious.. delicious As sleeping under the moonlight.

أعلى شجرةٍ في العالم

عندما كنت طفلهْ . . . كنت أتصوّرُ أن الشَجرَهْ هي أعلى مكانٍ في العالمْ . . . وعندما أصبحتُ امرأهْ وعندما أصبحتُ امرأهْ وتسلَّقتُ على كتفيْكْ ومانَّ النومَ بين ذراعَيْكْ . . . لذيذٌ . . . لذيذْ كالنومِ تحتَ ضوء القَمَرْ . . .

XX

I DO NOT PERMIT

I do not permit The tribe to come between us. You are my tribe !

لا أسمح

لا أسمحُ للقبيلهْ . . أن تتدخَّلَ بيني وبينكْ أنتَ قبيلتي . . . ! ! !

XXI

IF

If you should decide one day, To hate me, Shoot me with a silencer To smother pain.



XXII

SMELL

When I bid you farewell at the airport, And your face disappears in the unknown, The smell of my longing for you spreads out, And people in the passengers lounge Smell something strange The smell of a woman burning.

XXIII

WHAT USE IS MY MOUTH ?

If I cannot take My coffee with you Then why do cafés exist ? . And if I cannot wander With you aimlessly, Then why do streets exist ? . If I cannot twitter Your name without fear, Then why do languages exist ? . If I cannot shout "I love you," Then what use is my mouth ? .

لماذا فمي ؟ .

إذا كنتُ لا أستطيعُ أن أشربَ القهوةَ معكْ . . فلماذا وُجدَتِ المقاهي ؟ . . وإذا كنتُ لا أستطيعُ أن أتسكَّعَ معكَ بغير هَدَفْ فلماذا وُجدتِ الشوارعْ ؟ . . وإذا كنتُ لا أستطيعُ أن أتغرْغَرَ باسْمِكَ بلا خوفْ . . فلماذا كانتِ اللَّغَاتْ ؟ . . وإذا كنتُ لا أستطيعُ أن أصرخَ (أُحبُّكْ) . . فما جدوى فمى ؟ . .

XXIV

LEGITIMACY

I do not ask this age To recognize the legitimacy of our love: You . . and I Give this age its legitimacy.
شرعيّة

لا أطلب من هذا العَصرْ أن يعترف بشرعيَّة حُبِّنا فأنا . . . وأنت . . . نمنحُ هذا العصرَ شرعيَّتَهْ .

XXV

A NEW DEFINITION OF THE THIRD WORLD

Because love with us Is a third-rate emotion; The woman, a third-rate citizen, And poetry books : third-rate books, They call us third world peoples.

تعريفٌ جديدٌ للعالم الثالث

XXVI

INVENTING PROPHETS

All religions come to us inherited, Except love. It is the only religion That invents its own prophets.

يخترع انبياءه

كُلُّ الدِيَاناتِ تنتقلُ إلينا بالوراثَهْ . . . إلا الحبُّ . . فهو الدينُ الوحيدْ الذي يخترعُ أنبياءَهْ . . .

XXVII

CHEMISTRY

Love is an upturn in body-chemistry A courageous rejection Of the routine of things, And the power of biology . . . Yearning to you is a bad habit I know not how to get rid of. Your love is a major disobedience I do not wish forgiveness.

XXVIII

FREE PORT

Numerous ships have asked For refuge at the havens of my eyes, And I refused them all. Your vessels only Have the right to take refuge In my territorial waters. Your vessels only Can sail in my blood, Without permission.

XXIX

EXCEPT ONE CITY

All cities of the world Seem to me dots on the map, Except one city: Where I fell in love with you. After that, it became My homeland.

إلا مدينةً واحدة

كلُّ مدائن العالم تبدو لي على الخارطة نِقَاطًا وهميَّهْ . . . إلا مدينةً واحدهْ . . أحببتُكَ فيها . . . وأصبحتْ فيما بعدُ . . وطني . . .

() ...

XXX

MOTHERHOOD

My joy in meeting you Is like the first beat of the embryo, On the inside of the womb; Like the first movement In Beethoven's fifth symphony. You, man who emerges From the crevices of my mind, Wherever you may be On the map of this world : Remember my motherhood.

فَرَحى بلقائكْ كالضَرْبَةِ الأولى للجنين على جدران الرَحِمْ . . كالحركةِ الأولى من سيمفونية بيتهوفن الخامسة فيا أَيُّها الرجلُ الطالعُ من تشقُّقات فكري . حيثما تكونُ على خريطة هذا العالمْ تذكَّرْ أُمُومَتي . . .

XXXI

PROPHECY

My mother stamped you on my memory Before I was born. She prophesied that you will be mine, So I hastened my birth.

نُبُوءة

وَشَمَتْكَ أُمّي على ذاكرتي قبلَ أن أُولَدْ وتنبَّأتْ بأن تكونَ لي . . . فاسْتَعْجَلتُ الولادَهْ . . .

123

XXXII

THE LONGEST RIVER IN THE WORLD

When I dance with you, My waist becomes an ear of corn; My hair becomes The longest river in the world.

XXXIII

LOVERS' PRIVILEGES

Your face is my passport. With it I tour the world, And enter all harbors and airports. When the security men see you, Hidden in my eyes, They open up the V.I.P. lounge for me, Offering refreshments and flowers, And give me priority of passage, Because I am in love.

.

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XXXIV

THE LAST HAVEN

I promise you to be your homeland, So promise me you'll be my capital. I promise you to be your dream-boat, So promise me I'll be your last haven. I promised you to be your cloud, So promise me you'll be my rain.

آخرُ المرافىء

أعِدُكَ أن أكونَ وطنَكْ فعِدْني أن تكونَ عاصمتي أعِدُكَ أن أكونَ سفينةَ أحلامِكْ . . فعِدني أن أكونَ آخِرَ مرافِئكْ . . . وعدتُكَ أن أكون غَيْمتَكْ فعِدْني أن تكون مَطَرِي . . .

XXXV

IDENTITY

People know me through you : You are my private perfume.

يعرفُني الناسُ بِكْ فأنتَ عطري الخُصُوصيّ . . .

XXXVI

THE IMPOSSIBLE TRAVEL

I fear opening my suitcases, When I come back from travel. Whenever I try to hang my clothes, You come out to me, Like a fish from inside the suitcase, And hang me on the line of my tears.

XXXVII

A CHERRY

The music of your voice, And Clayderman's piano, Two wings I fly with, to you. Therefore, open your lips So I can fall between them like a cherry.

حَبَّةُ كَرَز

موسیقی صوتكْ وبیانو كلیدرمانْ . . . جناحان أطيرُ بهما نحوكْ فافْتَحْ شفتيكْ . . . لأسقطَ كحَبَّةِ كَرَزٍ بينهما . .

XXXVIII

THE PRAYING WOMAN

Your fingers burn on the table, Like church candles, And I Want to pray.



XXXIX

HYSTERIA

O man who led me into the world of madness And locked the door against me ! Leave me as I am, For happy I am to lie Under the sun of your madness.

هيستيريا

يا أيُّها الرجلُ الذي أدخلني عالمَ الجُنونْ . . وأقفلَ البابَ عليّ أترُكْني كما أنا . . . فأنا سعيدة بالاسْتلقاء تحتَ شَمْس ِ جُنُونِكْ . . .

XL

THE DEAREST PEARL

When I was a child
I used to listen, spellbound,
To the tales of pearl-fishers at home;
How the courageous divers
Used to give their life to gain a pretty pearl.
When I became a woman,
And entered the sea of your love,
I learned the pleasure of diving into the unknown,
To gain you,
O dearest pearl in my life.

الدانةُ الأغلى

XLI

STROKE OF LOVE

They tell me in Switzerland : "Put on heavy woolen clothes To avoid a stroke of cold." I obeyed them, And put on a thousand hats, And a thousand woolen sweaters. But in spite of all that protected my body, I forgot to protect my heart, And was hit by a stroke of love.

XLII

ESPRESSO

I cannot imagine That the one who made the espresso coffee Could have made it for one person, Otherwise he would have been a stupid man Who knows nothing about the making of coffee, And nothing about the industry of love.
.

XLIII

CURIOSITY

In European cafés I read my paper alone. In Arabian cafés All the others read it with me.

•

•

في المقاهي الأوربيَّة أقرأً جريدتي وحدي . . . وفي المقاهي العربيه يقرأ كلُّ الجالسينَ جريدتي معي . .

XLIV

PRAYER

I prayed to God one night, To liberate me from your love. God answered my prayer, And turned me into a stone.

XLV

FOOLISHNESS

We bring the scissors, And cut the ribbon of our relations, In a dramatic gathering. Then we discover we have not cut the ribbon, But our fingers.

XLVI

A WOMAN'S SECRET

Tell me, "I love you". Tell me, "I love you". I know you hate repetition, And know what you think of silent speech, And of speaking silence. But, as a woman, I love him who scratches my feminine skin.

XLVII

PRICE OF MOTHERHOOD

I cannot say 'No' to you, And cannot stand in the face Of your little whims, You exploit your childhood cleverly, And I pay the price of my motherhood.

ثمنُ الأمومة

XLVIII

IF I SHOULD CAST MYSELF

If I should cast myself From the top of this world, To get rid of the opium of your love, People would find me Lying in your arms

XLIX

SPARROWS

I do not mind the rumors They tell about you and me. On the contrary, I open my house-windows to them, Give them seeds on my palm, And let them flutter in my wardrobe. In my country, rumors about love Are beautiful sparrows, And I refuse to kill the sparrows.

عصافير

THE LAST BATTLE

A man you are, full of women to surfeit. And when you come to me in the evening, Laden with *kohl*, perfume, and nails, I wipe your wounds with rose-water And beg you to take off your helmet, To throw your sword on the floor, And make me Your last battle.

L

المعركة الأخيرة

رجلٌ أنتَ مكتظٌ بالنساء حتى التُخْمَهْ . . وحينَ تأتيني مساء مُثْخَناً بالكحْل ، والعِطْر ، والأظافرْ . . أَمْسَحُ جراحَكَ بماء الوَرْدْ . . وأتوسَّلُ إليكَ ، أن تَخْلَعَ خُوذتَكْ وترمي سَيْفَكَ على الأرضْ . . وتجعلَني . . . معركتكَ الأخيرَهْ . . .

CULTURE

You are the first man of culture I know, Who does not consider sex a national demand, Or turn the bed Into a speech-platform.



.

LII

LOVE AND THE DETENTION CAMP

This circle you drew in China ink Round my mind, taste, habits; Round every inch of my body, Every wave of my soul, Every point in my life, large or small; This circle Is beginning to look like a detention camp. Don't tighten the circle too much round me. I want you to be my love, Not my prison-keeper .

هذه الدائرةُ التي رسمتَها بالحبر الصينيّ حول فكري . وذوقي . وعاداتي حولَ كلِّ بُوصَةٍ من جَسَدي وكلِّ موجةٍ من تموّجاتِ نفسي وكلِّ صغيرةٍ . . وكبيرةٍ في حياتي . هذه الدائرة . . . فلا تُضيِّقْ الدائرة عليَّ كثيراً لأنني أريدكَ حبيبي . . لا سَجّاني . .

LIII

BETWEEN YOUR ARMS

Between your arms The exile turns Into a homeland.

بين ذراعيكْ

بينَ ذراعيكْ يتحوَّلُ المنفى . . . إلى وَطَنْ . .

LIV

WHEN

When a woman is In a state of love, Her blood turns Violet.



عندما تكونُ المرأة في حالة عِشْقْ يصير لونُ دمِها . . . بَنَفْسَجَيّاً . .

LV

THE OTHER COPY

Do not walk beside me On the shores of Lake Leman, So the lake should not think I am your other copy.

النسخة الثانية

LVI

AT MOZART'S HOUSE

When we entered Mozart's house in Salzburg, And he saw me with you, And saw the Arabian *Kohl* around my eyes, He sat at the old piano And played *il Nozze di Figaro* for us, Forgetting all the tourists.

في بيت موزارت

LVII

QUESTIONS

They ask me what colour is the sky? . Is it blue? . Red? . Or violet? . I ask them to turn the question to you, Because you are my sky.



LVIII

AUTONOMOUS RULE

You are like the old colonialist, Laying your hand on my mines, My corn, fruits, metals, And natural resources, Holding on to the land And the owner of the land. I do not want to drive you away And sink your ships, Anchoring in the waters of my eyes. But I want you to let me have, Though on probational basis, A sort of autonomous rule.

LIX

CURIOSITY

I know I am the first woman in your life. But the devil who takes the coffee, With us every morning, Is always inciting me to ask you : "But who is the second?".

فضول

أعرف أننى المرأةُ الأولى في حياتكْ ولكنَّ الشيطانَّ الذي يشربُ القهوةَ معنا کلَّ صباحْ يظلُّ دائماً يحرِّضني كي أسألكْ . . «ومَنْ هي الثانَيهُ ؟ ؟ . .»

LX

POLITICAL OPPRESSION

Before I met you, I thought brain-washing Is a characteristic of totalitarian states. After I met you, And you brain-washed me Of all the cafés I entered before you, And all the beaches I used to swim at before you, And all the men who took me to dinner before you, I began to see That political oppression, And emotional oppression Are one institution.
قمع سیاسی

قبلَ أن أعرفَكْ . . كنتُ أظنُّ أن عمليَّاتِ غسيل الدماغْ . . هي من طبيعة الدول الاستبداديَّهْ بعد أن عرفتُكْ . . وغسلتَ دماغي . . من كلِّ المقاهي التي دخلتُ إليها قبلَكْ . . وكلِّ الشواطىء التي كنتُ أستحمّ في مياهها قبلَكْ ـ . وكلِّ الرجال الذين دعوني إلى العشاء قبلَكْ بدأتُ أفهمْ والقمعَ العاطفيّ هما مؤسَّسَةٌ واحدهْ . .

LXI

IS THAT THING LOVE ? .

In my blood I hear an unusual clamor. Is that thing love ? .

هل هذا هو الحُبّ ؟

13

أسمعُ في دمي ضجةً غيرَ اعتياديهْ هل هذا هو الحُبّ ؟ ؟ .

LXII

HAD I KNOWN

Had I known that you love books To that extent I would have bought my clothes from book-shops.

LXIII

BULLET

I shot at your pleasant smell, At your voice, At the seat you rest in, And the paper you read, And the golden chain around your neck. I shot five bullets at you, And after the sixth one I fell down.

LXIV

EQUATIONS

A grain of corn + A grain of corn = An ear of corn. A pigeon + A pigeon = A summer. A lip + A lip = A cherry orchard. A sparrow + Two wings = Liberty. Ink + Paper = Cultural revolution. My hand + Your hand = Goldsmiths market. Man + Woman = Two exposed electric wires. You + I = Poetic tremor under the skin of the globe.

LXV

THE FUGITIVE MOON

I cry out : "I love you" The moon leaves home, wife and children, And slips under my bed-sheets.

•

القمرُ الهارب

. •

LXVI

O MOST BEAUTIFUL COLONIALIST

I am an old member In the organization for defence of human rights. Since I was a student I joined in all processions Demanding to drive out colonialism. But since I knew you, I forgot my rights, And I am no longer keen on driving you away, O most beautiful colonialist.

LXVII

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

After every one of your visits I sit, like earthquake victims, On the edge of my seat Counting my casualties And gathering my fragments.

بعد الزلزال

LXVIII

DOUBLE STANDARD

How eloquent and flowing You sound, when you talk About the impasse of the Arabian woman, And the necessity to lift the historic siege Off her tongue, And mind, And her body, buried under the sand. But what is surprising Is that, when you write, You always put "the woman" Between inverted comas.

LXIX

NON-POLITICAL ASYLUM

I cry out, "I love you" The pigeons leave the church-roofs, To build their nests, In the folds of my hair.

•

LXX

RETURN TO THE CELL

When the Arabian woman travels To Paris, London, or to Rome She immediately takes on the form of a pigeon, Fluttering over statues, Sipping water from fountains, And feeding the lake-ducks with her hand. But, on the way back, When the plane-captain asks to fasten seat-belts, And stop smoking, The dream evaporates, The fountain music dries, The white duck feathers scatter, And she enters, with the other hens, To her coop.

LXXI

THE RING

I cry out, "I love you" And my mouth circles Like a ruby ring.



LXXII

COFFEE CIVILIZATION

You taught me, Among other things, To take my espresso At the little Italian cafés On the shores of Como Venice, And San Remo. But after you left, The Roman civilization left with you; Julius Caesar was assassinated, And the espresso aroma Became a stabbing knife in my side.

حضارة القهوة

علَّمتَني من بين ما علَّمتَني أن أشرب قهوة الأكسبرسو في المقاهي الإيطالية الصغيرَة على شواطيء كومو ، وفينيسيا . . وسان ريمو . . ومان رحلت رحلت الحضارة الرومانية معكْ وقتِلَ يوليوسْ قيصرْ . . وصارت رائحة الإكسبرسو تدخُلُ كالسكّين في خاصرتي . .

LXXIII

LANGUAGE REMARK

It is not important that you say You love me. The important thing is that I know How you love me.

ملاحظةً لغويّة

ليس مُهمَّا أن تقول : إِنَّكَ تُحِبُّني . المهمّ أن أعرفَ كيف تُحبّني .

LXXIV

TRY TO INVENT ME

I am tired of traditional talk About love. Tired of courting the dead, The flowers of the dead And of sitting at the dinner table Every night, With Qais ibn al-Mulawwah^{*} And Jameel Buthaina^{*} And the rest of the permanent members Of the Udhri Love Club. Try to go off the text a bit. Try to invent me.

^{*} These two Arabian poets represent the traditional "pure love" of the tribes of 'Udhra and Bani 'Amer.

LXXV

MY HOMELAND YOU ARE

I no longer have a homeland to resort to. So, make your arms my homeland. They confiscated my time. So, you became the time.

1000

وطني أنت

.

لم يبقَ لي وطنُ أعودُ إليهِ . . فاجْعَلْ من ذراعَيْكَ الوَطَنْ هُمْ صادَرُوا زَمَني فأصْبَحْتَ الزَمَنْ .

LXXVI

INGRATITUDE

The child sucks at his mother's breasts, Till he has enough. He reads by the light of her eyes, Till he learns to read and write. He steals from her wallet, To buy a pack of cigarettes. He walks over her lean bones, Till he graduates from university. When he becomes a man, He sits in one of the élite cafés, Putting one leg across another, And holds a press-conference to say That the woman has half a mind, And half a religion. Then he is applauded by the flies And the café waiters.

LXXVII

LOVE ON A UNIVERSAL LEVEL

When I love you I overstep the limits of a special relation To embark upon a love relation With the entire universe . . .

الحبُّ على مستوى الكون

LXXVIII

A LEAVE

I wish you could give me a leave, Even for a few days, To repair all this destruction, Which you left on my lips, And rearrange all this chaos, Which you left everywhere: On the walls of my room, On the walls of my heart. I wish you could keep a little distance, So I can tell the difference Between the aroma of my coffee, And the smell of my blood . . .
إجازة

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LXXIX

A BRIEF DREAM

Let me sleep for five minutes, On your shoulders, So the globe can regain balance.

÷.

حلم صغير

أتركْني نائمةً خمسَ دقائقْ على كتفَيكْ حتّى تتوازنَ الكرةُ الأرضيَّهْ .

LXXX

TRAVELLING ON EYELASHES

I walked to you on my eyelashes, And did not arrive. I walked on my tears, And did not arrive. I walked on my pride, And did not arrive. 0 you who block the cross-roads, And tamper with traffic signs, Could you show me a road ?. That does not lead me to your arms . That does not lead me to the abyss .

LXXXI

MOTHERHOOD

Sometimes, I feel like giving you birth, In order to give you a bath, And towel your feet; To comb your smooth hair, And lull you to sleep . . .



*

-

LXXXII

KING

I cry out, "I love you" The town comes out : men, women, Old and young To welcome you. Pigeons fly out, The army band plays, Children hands fill With sweets; Minarets light; Church bells ring, Announcing your coronation : A king over my heart .

الملك

LXXXIII

OPEN TEXT

The most significant thing about you Is that you do not deal with me As a finished poem; But you deal with me As a text open on liberty.

النصُّ المفتوح

أهمُّ ما فيكْ أنَّكَ لا تتعاملُ معي كقصيدةٍ منتهيهْ . . وانما تتعاملُ معي كنصٍّ مفتوحٍ على الحريَّهْ . .

LXXXIV

DOTTING THE I'S

I shout at the top of my voice : "I love you". I shout in the languages I know, And the languages I do not know : "I love you". I declare in a public meeting, Attended by the sun, the moon, and the rest of the planets: "I love you". For I do not respect a love Which wears masks, Moves behind the scenes And lives in a ghetto.

النقاط على الحروف

LXXXV

TEACHER

What a man you are, Sir !
What marks you left on my mind !
What wild fishes
You let loose in my arteries !
What revolutionary serums !
For, after every day I spend with you
I come back full of the sun,
Stained with lightning,
And in my eyes race the steeds of liberty.

LXXXVI

ARABIAN DRACULA

O, my lord ! O, King of love and liberator of women ! To you I resorted for protection Against cruel elements. But when you saw me, Broken and defeated, You turned my parts into yet smaller parts, Then you left me lost, Like a particle of dust, Between heaven and earth . . .

LXXXVII

LOVE ON CHARCOAL FIRE

The difference between a European woman in love, And the Arabian one, Is that the first takes fast meals, And frozen foods, And frozen love; While the Arabian woman in love Is barbecued, On charcoal fire.

LXXXVIII

ANALYSIS

The nurse came this morning. She drew a drop of my blood, And a drop of yours. She took them to the town laboratory. Why trouble themselves? . Don't they know that great love Cancels all blood groups ? .

LXXXIX

LIKE

Like a plane entering an air-pocket, Not knowing how to get out of it, I entered your emotional air-pocket, O man, Then I could no longer tell The entrance from the exit.

XC

BLACKMAIL

Every time you wound me with your words You say : Forgive my childhood. How long will you exploit my motherhood, My lord, How long ? .

كلما جرحتنى بسكاكين كلماتِكْ تقولُ لي : اغفري لي طفولتي فإلى متى تستغلُّ أمومتي ؟ . يا سيّدي . . إلى متى ؟ ؟ .

3

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XCI

DREAM I

Last night I dreamt That I became an ear of corn, In the prairies of your chest. I did not tell you of my dream, For fear you might take me to the town's baker, Who will turn me into a hot loaf For you to eat.

XCII

DREAM II

Last night I dreamt That I became a fish, Swimming in the clear water of your eyes. I did not tell you of my dream, For fear you might close your eyelashes And suffocate me.

XCIII

DREAM III

Last night I dreamt That I am a secret poem, Hidden in one of your drawers I did not tell you of my dream, For fear you might give it to some publisher And give me away.

XCIV

DREAM IV

Last night I dreamt That you bought me a mythical yacht, Carrying me from your upper lip To your lower lip ; From your right arm To your left arm. I did not tell you of my dream, For fear you might sell my dream yacht And sell me.

XCV

DREAM V

Last night I dreamt That I was lying under the trees of your tenderness, And that you were giving me sparrow milk to drink, And feeding me the fruit of the moon. I did not tell you what I saw, For fear you might laugh at my fancies And break the chest of my dreams.

حلم ٥

حلمتُ ليلةَ أمسْ بأننى مستلقيَةٌ تحتَ أشجارِ حنانِكْ وأنكَ تسْقيني حليبَ العصافيرْ وتُطْعِمُني فاكهةَ القَمَرْ . . خفتُ أن أقصَّ عليكَ ما رأيتْ حتى لا تضحكَ من تخيّلاتي وتكسرَ صندوقَ أحلامي .

XCVI

TO AN ARABIAN ROBOT IN LOVE

1

Your major problem, my friend, Is that you store in your memory All the traditional ideas, All the conventional terms, And all you inherited from your ancestors Of possessive tendencies, Sovereignty, And polygamy.
Your major problem is that, Despite your talk about modernity, You are not modern. And despite your talk about contemporaneity, Your are not contemporary. And despite your numerous trips, You have never left your tent.

Your major problem is that You are still a feudalist, In the Marxist age; Still a tribal, In the liberal age; Still holding on to your she-camel In the star-war age.

Your major problem is that

You do not give up one inch

Of your historic narcissism.

You ask women to dance,

But you only turn around yourself.

You sleep with professional women,

But you only sleep with yourself.

Your major problem is that

You are armored against love,

Against poetry,

Against tenderness.

And that, since I knew you, you have never opened

One window to let in the sun,

And the sparrows.

•

Your major problem is that

You buy books, but you do not read them.

You go to museums,

But cannot taste the marriage of lines and colours.

You stay at first-class hotels,

But you do not live.

You change women

As you change your shirts,

And your neck-ties.

You make love,

Like you take off your shoes.

Your major problem is that All you know about love Comes from *A Thousand and One Nights*. Keep your metal memory as you wish. My last concern is To be loved by a computer.

XCVII

THE MOON ON THE WANTED LIST

1

Everything around us is falling : Joy, Childhood, Poetry notebooks, Dream trees. Everything is narrowing down, Even the space of the sea, And the space of liberty.

القمر . . على قائمة المطلوبين

1 كلُّ شيءٍ من حولِنا يتساقطْ . . الفَرَحُ . . والطفولةُ . . ودفاتِرُ الشِعْرْ ، وشجرُ الأحلامْ . ک کل شيءِ يضيق حتى مساحةُ البحرْ ومساحةُ الحريَّة

Even the sun in this age of darkness Was taken from her home^{*} And sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment, Charging her with distributing her light To the windows of citizens. Even the moonlight, They had his pictures posted on all city walls, And demanded his arrest, Alive or dead.

^{*} In the Arabic Language, the sun is feminine, the moon is masculine.

Even the ears of corn Were put under house arrest. They prevented sparrows from visiting them. Even our talk in the café, or on the phone, Is recorded on tapes.

They are trying to assassinate the poems,

Burn the green woods of love,

Eradicate the manhood of men,

The womanhood of women.

But,

We shall defend love with every force.

For love alone

Will defeat the barbarian armies.

And check the assault of the ages of decline.

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سُعَبًا والصَبْبَاح

في البدَء كَانَتِ الأنتى

مَع تَرَجَمة كَاملة إلى اللغَة الإنجُليزيَّة

بقكم الدكتور عَبُدُ الوَاحِبُ لُتُوْلُوَة

دارصادر

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في البدء كانتِ الأنثى