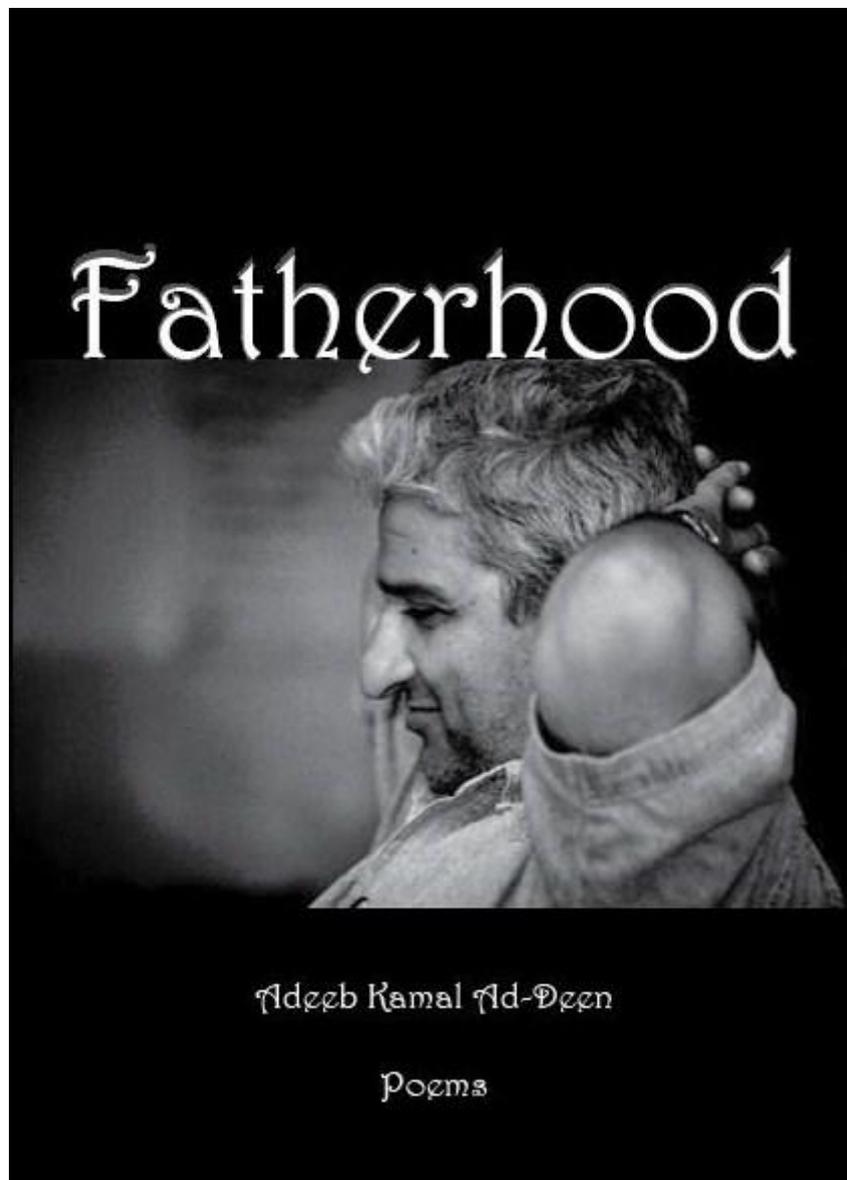


# Fatherhood

**Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen**

Poems



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- "Fire and Sinbad" appeared in "Culture is ..." an anthology (edited by Anne-Marie Smith) 2008.

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## About the Author

Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen (Iraq -1953) is a poet, journalist and translator who has degrees in Economics and English Literature from the University of Baghdad plus a Diploma of Interpreting (Arabic-English) from Adelaide Institute of TAFE, South Australia. He has published ten poetry collections and won the major prize of Iraqi poetry in 1999. His poetry has been translated into many languages and reviewed by many Iraqi, Tunisian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Yemeni and Moroccan critics and published in "Man of Letters: 33 critics write about Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen's poetry" (edited by Dr. Migdad Rahim). He has translated into Arabic short stories and poems from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, China and the USA.

Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen now lives in Australia as an Australian citizen and was a special guest at Friendly Street Poets in Adelaide in 2004 and at the Gallery de la Catessen in Adelaide in 2006. Some of his featured poems have been published in "The Best Australian Poems 2007" (edited by Peter Rose) and in many Australian websites, magazines and books, such as "Southerly", "Meanjin" and "Friendly Street Poets.

His website: [www.adeebk.com](http://www.adeebk.com)

## *Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen's poetry:*

### *The shades of darkness*

#### **Jude Aquilina**

I have had the pleasure of knowing Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen through my position at the South Australian Writers' Centre for a number of years. Even before I read his extraordinary poetry, I soon realised, through our conversations, that he was a wise and articulate man. Here is a writer who seeks to understand the passion, and the suffering in the world today and, through his poetry, shares his innate knowledge of the human soul.

Born in Babylon, Iraq in 1953, Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen has pursued a lifetime of writing and learning. He has degrees in Economics and English Literature from the University of Baghdad. He has worked as a journalist and translator, alongside his career as a widely published poet. To date, Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen has published ten collections of poetry, and his poems have been translated into many languages, including English, German and French. He recently attained a Diploma of Interpreting (Arabic-English) from Adelaide Institute of TAFE, South Australia.

Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen is known as 'The Man of Letters' in his home country. In a literary study on his works, published in 2007 in Lebanon, 33 critics discuss and applaud his poetry. Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen is quickly gaining a reputation as one of Australia's finest poets, with work represented in high profile Australian literary journals like *Meanjin* and *Southerly*, and in anthologies such as *The Best Australian Poems, 2007*, Edited by Peter Rose, published by Black Inc Press and *Culture is*, 2008, Edited by Anne-Marie Smith, published by Wakefield Press.

Layered in meaning and nuance, Kamal Ad-Deen's poetry is rich with deft imagery and well-chosen, often hard-hitting, language. Wide-ranging in his choice of subject matter, the poet pays heartfelt tribute to loss and grief but also to love in its many forms. Unafraid to address issues such as war, human rights and personal relationships, Kamal Ad-Deen does so with skill and empathy. Expect the unexpected! These poems are loaded with the strange and the symbolic. Suffering is shared, and the mysteries and intricacies of Iraqi culture are thoughtfully explored, making the personal universal.

Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen's choice of metaphors and similes is always apt, often pleasingly strange:

**'I was as delighted as a corpse  
With its new grave.'**

His poems reflect his love of language, both English and Arabic, and are rich with exotic imagery, as in 'An Attempt at Eulogy'. Here the use of repetition and word play, create a dreamlike picture in the reader's mind:

**'As good as a lost date  
As lean as a Bedouin fire' . . .  
'as lean as a lost date  
As good as a Bedouin fire'.**

Kamal Ad-Deen's love of language, of words, and in particular of the letters in the Arabic alphabet is apparent throughout this collection. The letters that make up the holy Koran are explored in depth and steeped in symbolism.

In the tender poem 'Kelmat' the poet writes to his ten-year-old daughter:

**'Whenever I want to drink from the glass  
The glass of poison  
As Socrates did  
I remember you  
And I throw the glass away.'**

The poet's subtle sense of humour is also well placed, providing balance to the shades of darkness; I quote, 'like a good fire which

dogs make water on'. Often cyclic in form and always satisfyingly whole, these poems know how to dance!

As a fellow poet, I am grateful that Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen chose to make Adelaide his home. His contribution to the South Australian writing community and to Australian poetry publishing is already significant. His dedication to the art is evident in the steady stream of new work he produces and publishes. I look forward to reading more of his writings, both new and translated older works.

I am certain that the exciting poetic voice of Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen will continue to resonate with readers around the world.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Jude Aquilina*

## ***The poems:***

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- *Boredom*
- *An Attempt at the Bullet*
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- *An Attempt to Fly*

## ***Kelmat* \***

1

Whenever I want to drink from the glass  
The glass of poison  
As Socrates did  
I remember you  
And I throw the glass away.

2

Whenever I want to travel throughout the Heaven  
As Dante did  
Or to have my brother and myself lost  
As Joseph's brothers did  
Or to enter the fire  
As Abraham did  
I remember you  
And I stop traveling,  
Loss,  
And fire.

3

All right, then  
If you take me back to life.  
All right ...

But what is the solution  
When death, my faithful friend,  
Does not stop knocking at my door?  
Tell him with the innocence of your heart  
Not to come back  
Ere we meet  
On the peak of letter mountain  
Or in exile  
Or in legend.

4

All right, then  
For me to resume practicing my role  
In the drama of the lost humanity.  
A drama that continued from Babylon to Baghdad  
To Beirut, Berlin and London  
Then surely ended in hell.  
All right, then  
To resume practicing my role  
As your father.  
But I cannot talk well to you  
Since your alphabet is six thousand years old  
Nor can I dance well with you  
For my white and red blood cells  
Have been exhausted by oppression and captivity  
Nor can I give you advice  
Because you are more mature  
Than the queen bee.

5

That is how things are  
I bend before you  
Like an emaciated lion  
Ruined by years, loneliness and earthquake.  
I bend before you  
And ask you again  
Nay, I beg you as an Indian beggar  
To let me drink the glass of poison  
And I promise you I will never drink it again,  
My daughter!

\*\*\*\*\*

*\* Kelmat is the name of the poet's daughter. She is ten years old as the poet writes this poem.*

## *An Attempt at Hamlet*

1

Ophelia!

A cloud of innocence,

Tell me; how did the whole world

Accumulate in your body,

Then get lost in water?

Tell me; how was my father murdered?

How did my mother release the snake

At my childhood's birds?

How did the ghost lead me to the ghost?

And death to the flood?

2

Ophelia!

Your moony body is my age's elegy.

Thus let me, like an orphan child

Whose feast garment is stolen,

Cry at you.

Let me explore your fresh body

To know the secret of madness and delirium.

Let me explore your forehead

To know the secret of rain.

12

Let me explore your fingers.  
To know the secret of joy  
Let me explore your slim belly  
To know the secret of childhood and assurance.

3

Ophelia!  
Your mythical beauty tortured me every day  
Until it led me to the exiles of words.  
Your saliva delighted me  
As a magician who gets delighted with the thunderbolt.  
Thus hug me  
Before the last drop of my blood  
Will pass away like you.  
Hug me,  
Before the water eats me.

4

Ophelia extended her hands to me.  
But once I kissed her luxuriant fingers,  
Then they turned to daggers and insults.  
Once I kissed her charming breast  
Then the devils and elves came out  
And surrounded me all around.  
Once I kissed her lips,  
Then the snake appeared to me  
And made me drink the poison  
In order to die... forever.

## *Fatherhood*

1

The sea is a cruel father  
Who deliberately frightens me with a knife.  
The sea is false dates  
And vague signals of glow and moaning.  
The sea is blazing wars  
And people deserting homelands  
Sleeping naked at night like fish.  
The sea is poems  
Examining their palms by the fire  
To realize the secret of my youth.  
The sea is women, taking off the cuffs  
Dancing at a mythical dawn  
The song of the drowning boats  
And the captain's moan.  
They whisper like crystal  
I, the enchanted child, rise up  
I grope the waist of sand and the mounds of mud.

2

Go down!  
The sea is a myth.  
The spirit's bunches have fallen  
In the middle of the waves.

The love words have fallen and the grass has roved.

The hours have disappeared.

Damn!

You have not brought me the sea pearls

As people have brought.

What a disappointment!

You have come to me with poor man's eyes,

Martyr's homesickness,

A prophet's speech,

And a song saying:

The sea is an everlasting blood bleeding

From a god's wound.

3

The sea is a father,

Tonight,

Will slay me with a knife!

## *Sleeplessness*

Sleep

The flower dropped into the well.

The boys disbanded.

Oh! My eye,

Your eye has become a minaret and ash.

Sleep

Time was almost dawn

And no one housed you: who houses us?

Your palm was empty except for the scent of myrtle

And of a dream extended to fuse the circle of people

Into flowers, Euphrates and date palms.

Running after the years tried us.

A letter like a hot bull tried us:

How could we tame it by our nails?

Our nails were full of the moaning,

Of blood and head.

Sleep

You who dropped the flower into the well

You who dropped the flower into the guards' well.

Now you have become no more than a blind dervish

Weeping in the darkness for God's sun.

Sleep

At this moment there is no one to protect you from

The people's action

The people are asleep.....asleep.

## *Boredom*

1

I got bored with looking at the bears  
Eating greedily the giving  
Of their great bear,  
And with the monkeys  
Climbing the trees  
Every day  
To throw fruit  
And fill the air with screaming and yelling.  
I got bored with the dogs  
Sniffing the corpses,  
With the parrots crushing the words,  
And with the dove deserting us  
Every day  
To die in the midst of the letter boat  
Searching for Noah and his great flood.

2

I got bored with waiting and non-waiting,  
With advantage and disadvantage,  
With friendship and enmity,  
With the charity bread  
And the bread soaked in blood,  
With the scent of meaning

And the scent of meaninglessness,  
With heaven that never comes  
And with hell that stripteases every day  
To uncover its violent attractiveness  
In the circus of great torture.

3

I got bored with crying and silence,  
With tears and with petrified tears,  
With those who crossed the isthmus  
And sold our clothes.  
With those who surrounded us  
And stole our letters  
In great pleasure.

4

I got bored with mail  
And the post box,  
With the faithless friends,  
And the rough friends,  
And the thieving friends  
With the letter at its blazing  
But finds nobody to see its light.  
And the letter dying  
But finds nobody to recite upon it  
The first sura of the Holy Koran.

5

I got bored with war and peace,

With hunting and hiding,  
With poverty and the ghost of poverty,  
With hunger and the bear of hunger,  
With embers put on the tongue,  
With the salt put in the base of the wall,  
With female slaves' legs and effeminate men,  
With harlots' lips,  
Spinsters' breasts  
And beggars' palms  
With time that turns into sand,  
Straw and ash.  
I got bored with you;  
Whoever you are  
Wherever you are  
I got bored with myself;  
I am the great bored one.

## *An Attempt at the Bullet*

I had a heart  
When I grew up  
My heart turned into a sparrow  
Then into a flower,  
A word,  
A tear,  
A piece of bread.  
When I became older  
My heart turned into a steel bullet,  
Cold and smooth.  
Once I tried to protest against this change  
The warplanes saw my heart from a distance  
And sent a rocket at me.  
It blasted me from inside  
So, I fragmentized ... fragmentized  
Until I saw the sparrow dropping  
With one wing,  
And I smelt the flower red and red.  
With the word, I wrote my tear and bread  
And I touched the bullet;  
It was as cold and smooth as death.

## *An Attempt at Isolation*

1

After my friends and brothers  
Dropped in the sea of hate,  
I got into my boat  
Traveling up to the lake of my blood.

2

After uncountable disasters,  
I reached myself and settled in.  
I was as delighted as a corpse  
With its new grave.

3

Thus, I have sat in myself  
To guard myself.  
In order not to forget  
What has been done to me,  
I have put a spear at my door,  
And spotted it with my blood.  
I have made out of mud a head like mine.  
I have put it on the spear and wept,  
Wept until my soul flowed out  
Then, I brought my soul back to the head.

4

Every morning I submissively kneel before the head

To say: “Good morning, Head!

You are heavy with sorrow and letters”.

The head replies very calmly:

“Good morning, owner of happy isolation”!

## *An Attempt to Await*

1

Which awaits which?

Does the sun await the street?

Or does the street await the people:

The simpletons and the beggars?

Do the fields await the bees?

Or do the bees await death?

Or does death await darkness?

Which awaits which?

Does disappointment await surprise?

Or does surprise await uselessness?

Does futility await lies?

Or do women await gossip?

Which awaits which?

Does the bridge await the Euphrates?

Or does the Euphrates await the hunched bridge?

Does the poet await the letters?

Or do the letters await the dots?

Which awaits which?

Does the killer await the victim?

Or does the victim await the knife?

Does time await people to put them to death?

Or do people await Time to beg or to become old?

Which awaits which?

Does the magician await the jinns\*?  
Or does the jinns knock at the door  
After being bored with waiting?

2

What a wait!  
When the sun cried I charged the street.  
When the fields cried I charged the bees.  
When fear cried I charged death.  
When disappointment cried I charged surprise.  
When women cried I charged the gossip.  
When the poet cried I charged letters.  
When the bridge cried I charged the Euphrates.  
What a wait!  
What a torture!  
When the killer cried I charged the victim.  
When Time cried I charged the people.  
When the magician cried I charged the jinns.

3

What a wait!  
It is said that the jinns and I  
Were waiting.  
If they knew,  
They would not have tolerated this strange torture.  
If they knew, they would have flown, flown, flown  
If...  
O! jinns  
Remember me ... remember me.

I am together with you in the flask of waiting.

I am together with you in an iron flask.

\*\*\*\*\*

*\* Jinn is a supernatural fiery creature.*

## *Strangers' Dining Table*

Strangers met at a dining table

My heart's table.

The eldest was turbaned

The second ascetic

The third erotic

The fourth a drunkard

The fifth omniscient

The sixth comic

The seventh a magician.

Instead of a joyful talk

On the affairs of birds, women and the life after death

The whole lot exchanged insults and calling names.

Then one of them proposed firing ...

I was about to die!

I was the eighth ... the dumb!

## *An Attempt at Eulogy*

1

At forty years old  
In the fortieth year  
I sat at the door of a dream.  
The dream was as lean as a lost date  
As good as a Bedouin fire.  
The playing cards were showing its picture  
With or without a crown  
In a formal uniform or with iqal\* on head.  
I became aware of its silence.  
I wept for its pearly tenderness.

2

At the fortieth shout  
I said:  
Dream, whose picture is shown by the playing cards  
On the right and the left  
On the left and the right,  
How much we have missed your kindness.  
How much we have missed your riding  
The horses and the evenings  
Asking after us  
We the undated letters

And the futureless dots  
And the meaningless future  
And the meaning that leads us ferociously  
To the death arena.

3

On the fortieth night  
My shout fell down.  
So I collected its fragmented glass with my wounded tongue.  
The shout was drawn by freedom.  
The shout was childish like water.  
I said:  
You, whose thin picture is shown by time cards  
Up and down  
Down and up,  
How do I deplore your royal forehead?  
I who made the tragedy by my blood  
And by the flight from the fake lion that ate my liver.

4

In the fortieth treasure  
The suns shrank and everything vanished.  
The river Tigris was not drawn with ink  
Nor with blood  
Nor with anything  
As if Tigris had never existed.  
I wondered at my cowardliness  
And at the confusion of my tales.

But your treasure – treasure of history – is more wonderful  
And your tale – tale of the depressed – is more complete.

5

At the fortieth stab  
I sat near your tree: the fig tree and said  
Tree of the one whose picture is shown by trees  
Time and again,  
I am now near you in the capitals of hunger.  
I pray God to make you fruitful  
So that I may be satiated  
And to supply you with water  
So that I may satisfy my thirst  
And to invoke you to write  
So that I may write my song for the dream  
Whose picture is shown by dust  
As good as a lost date  
As lean as a Bedouin fire.

6

At the fortieth door  
The dream had no interest in my shouts and death rattles  
Nor in my nudity and loss.  
The dream was over there ...  
Without his queens  
Without his butlers and retinue  
Without his guards, throne and gold  
Without any of those who carry out his orders.  
The dream was over there ...

Lying dead

Like a letter falling out of a dumb mouth

Like a love date torn by knives

Like a good fire which dogs made water on.

\*\*\*\*\*

*\*Iqal: a double-folded felt rope usually worn on the head by Arabs.*

## *Theft*

1

The letter has left me  
And retired in a corner.  
It could hardly bear  
The mountains of sadness  
Borne by the hands of my watch.  
It could hardly bear  
My crazy loneliness  
Nor my childhood that expanded  
And turned into an endless sea  
Nor my age which was nearly  
Fifty disasters old.  
The letter has retired in a corner  
Placed his head between his hands and cried.  
I also cried until my soul flowed.  
I returned it to my letter.  
My letter cried until its dot flowed.  
I returned it to Him ....to God.

2

Thus, I was destined  
To see my head borne by spears  
Like Al-Hussain's head.  
To see my body ulcerate and die  
Like Job's body.

To carry on my back  
Prometheus Rock  
In order to exchange the madness of the homeland  
By the unknown madness  
And the Euphrates ash by the ash of the crippled rivers  
And the joy of the Tigris by the joy of the cloud  
With worn-out under wears.

3

It was a happy day.  
During which I fetched a loaf  
For my children, exiled far into dream  
Without setting fire to Baghdad  
Through Haulage wars  
Nor killing the disarmed simple people  
Through Tamer Lane wars  
Now plundering female slaves  
Through Genghis Khan's Wars  
Without Kneeling to the Pharaoh of the Age  
Without hoisting the Barbarians' flag  
Without interfering in the crippled towns' wars.  
A hot loaf  
I baked it in the dream of the good letter  
And in the heavenly dot whose stalk is stable  
And whose heart is in the sky.  
But the thieves were waiting for me:  
Pharaoh's thieves  
Haulage's thieves  
Tamer Lane's thieves

Genghis Khan's thieves  
The Barbarians' thieves  
And the crippled towns' thieves.  
They robbed me in the broad light  
Cut my hand and blinded my eye  
And stole my hot loaf.  
Tonight, what will I say to my children?  
Tonight, what will I say to my heart?  
Tonight, what will I say to my letter  
And my dot?

## *The Past of Meaning*

1

The past came at the white dawn

Wearing a soiled hat

And a black dress.

The past came to streets that he knows

As a woman knows her hoopoe

And the place in which she submitted her nightingales to death.

2

The past behind the door, is he...?

But who can assure me that I can stay

Easy as the ladder

When a child attends so excited with death and forgetfulness?

3

The past is behind the door

While I am, for ages, wakeful as a broken clock.

But the past dare not enter

And I dare not open the door for guests I do not know.

4

The past sat behind the door.  
He ate behind the door,  
Slept and woke at dawn.  
He thought of nothingness for long.  
He married and practiced his blue habit.

5

Behind me is the door, before me is the door  
Behind me is the past, before me is the past.

6

Through the hole in the door  
I see him getting up from death  
Walking to and fro,  
To and fro and talking nonsense.  
I arrest myself.

7

At a white dawn like a knife  
I saw the soiled hat and the black dress.  
I remembered I was behind the door for countless ages  
As broken clocks I remained wakeful,  
Catching the past with my palm  
I stab him with the knife.

I choke him happily with death's breeze

Happily as the sunbeam

Happily with my moaning

Happily with the blackness of my blood.

## *An Attempt at Joy*

I reached out my hand to God  
To what is permissible by God.  
When He looked at me with all his mercy  
That wraps everything  
He did not place gold in my entreating palm  
Nor silver dinars.  
He placed nothing but a little letter  
It glittered with hope  
Like the feast of an orphan child.  
When God looked at my thirsty tear  
And my smashed heart  
He sped up to put a dot  
In the middle of the letter.  
So my heart became full of gold and silver dinars  
Become full of wisdom, joy and love.  
Thus, I was a desert and the letter a camel.  
Thus, I was a loss and the dot a meaning.  
Thus, it was my case until I had a fill.  
Thus, I flew together with my camel  
I flew like a cloud of light.

## *Laughter*

The rain has fallen drop by drop

Wave by wave

Sea by sea

Until the sun has risen, dancing in its wonderful light.

The children have laughed

And flown through the trees of almond, apple and orange.

The girls have laughed

And become conscious of their beautiful rounded breasts.

The sweethearts who have been smashed by love

And the screams of the body constrained every night

Have laughed.

The sparrows and starlings have laughed

In the middle of light and smoke.

The clocks and hospitals have laughed.

So have the patients, searching for a hope of recovery.

The policeman and the dictator have laughed.

So have the explosive-maker

And the bribed border guards.

The saints, the amazed, the exiled

And the semi-dressed women dancers have laughed.

So have the pupils

The bankers

The taxi drivers

The coolies and the fruit sellers

The thieves, the detectives

The genius and the quasi-genius  
So have the effeminate and the passers by.  
Those fond of nudeness  
And of tables of plentiful wine have laughed.  
The murdered and the drowned have laughed  
Then the dead altogether have laughed  
The laughter has increased  
Increased  
Increased  
I alone was reflecting on the scene and crying.  
I alone was reflecting on the scene  
And slowly dying.

## *The Head's Loneliness*

1

In my height,  
I heard the sound of days,  
The days were as widows dressed in black.  
In my paleness,  
I heard the guard's voice  
Quarrelling about the spoils of  
My boyhood, my youth and my beard's whiteness.  
So, I got confused;  
Was copper so cheap to this extent against gold?

2

In my height and paleness,  
My eyes were too tired to see  
Thus, I started to see through my ears  
And perceive through my heart.  
It was an absolute loneliness  
Loneliness looked just like me,  
I was the armless man  
Stabbed and confounded by the scene of blood  
Dripping heavily as a waterfall.  
The scene of blood was frigid and quiet  
As a child's lullaby.

3

In my height and paleness,  
I was transported from war to war,  
From desert to desert,  
From ship to ship,  
From confusion to confusion,  
From copper to copper.  
But gold observed me.  
My friends – before my enemies – bowed  
In front of the brilliance of gold.  
They secretly handed me to Judas  
And Judas, before everybody got up  
From his restless sleep,  
From his bitter greed,  
Led me to my exile and hell.  
Led me to my long spear.

4

Yah,  
My long spear!  
All of them bear copper spears  
Mine is the longest.  
Yah!  
How cool my forehead is!  
How peaceful my dream is!  
How beautiful my birds are!  
They follow me from slavery to slavery  
From freedom to freedom.  
All of them see but they do not understand.

All of them get tortured by the copper spears  
That enter their eyes blinded by brilliance.  
What cries they had!  
What sobs they had!  
What disappointments they had!

5

In my height,  
In my loneliness, paleness,  
And in my great travel,  
I heard the sound of everything.  
With the eyes, the ears, the heart  
I saw everything.  
I mocked the brilliance of gold and copper  
The brilliance of guards  
The brilliance of days  
And the brilliance of words.

## *Graves of Meaning*

A female forest is breaking off relations  
In an ambiguous music and wearing red colors  
Until I have ascertained that water  
Partially represented my shape.  
I am vanishing and turning into a wolf  
Near the glass of the forest  
A wolf searching for his she-wolf.  
I am the night, the only night,  
What is happening?  
The forest is playing.  
The play here is fierce and as sharp as a knife.  
The finger is raising something.  
The laughs are tearing off the clouds of the room.  
The female refuses, a female near a female,  
Nothing but a female.  
Time of female, give me a banquet!  
Do you play with the forest near me  
While I tear into times of desires?  
Do not scream, nor stab;  
I am thrown into the past of the past.  
The forest refuses, becomes angry  
And hides its laughs.  
The colors flow: the green is embraced by the red,

The blue is crystal,  
The yellow uncovers the colors of my torture.  
So, at ten years old I become a boy  
At twenty years old I became a monster  
At seventy years old I turn into a cave.  
The forest is playing.  
Look! Stare! Nothing but blind staring!  
The forest strips something, wears charm, grows and shows.  
The forest is ambiguous days breaking at night  
As a language invites the sea vehemently.  
The female laughs by the sea.  
That finger uncovers something recklessly.  
An aged man inside me torn by the torrential flow of colors  
A man tortured by a female body sleeps for years  
And wakes up on a dam of lusts  
A child tried by the night and leafed a down of birds.  
The forest is a female of light.  
The forest is playing. Look! Stare! Spend your lifetime!  
Nothing but the wicked staring!  
The forest is a comedy.  
The aged man passed away.  
The female is satiated by her play.  
She wore a black dress to cover  
The nakedness of fresh body.  
The child cried, cried at midnight.  
And I, carrying the aged man's coffin  
With female's colors and child's cry,  
Went away to water graves.

## **The crow**

1

When the crow passed

Over the head of Death, it said:

“I am the crow!”

“So what?” Death said.

“I am the black crow!” the crow said.

So Death laughed and said:

“For me you are whiter than ice!”

2

Yesterday I remembered you

You have no name nor address.

You whom I forgot before

The beginning of the flood.

So I danced without arms and feet.

3

When they removed my naked body to you.

People laughed at the whiteness of my heart

And at the blackness of my corpse.

4

Music of pain is unforgettable  
And lies of love are as true as  
The kiss of a teenager.

5

Why does time haunt you?  
Is it because you have breasts of pomegranate,  
A belly of ivory,  
Eyes narrow as a southern boat,  
And a fate that looks like the crow's?

6

Music played our fate;  
There were not so many colours.  
There was black as blood  
And there was white as blood too.

7

I return to poetry  
As usual  
Because of you.  
I return to see Time  
Beating my letters with his great whip.  
I return to see my biggest dot  
That looks like a big city  
Losing in the sea.

8

Your kisses did not reach.  
Maybe because the postman  
Was jealous of me.  
Maybe because your language  
Was white as the crow.

9

Your kisses did not reach  
Though your neck was warm.  
Yes, you were in your nineteenth summer.

10

You were full of music,  
Moony as a summer night,  
Obedient as a jewel that lights in the dark,  
Silly as a parrot that lisps,  
Foolish as a mad man's laugh.

11

You who taught me to dance:  
Dance over the corpses of letters  
And over the remains of burnt clocks.

12

You are my crow.  
This is what I had to say  
At the beginning of the poem  
To relieve others and relieve myself.

## *An Attempt at Remembrance*

1

Here I am!  
I have come back to your remembrance,  
Come back like a beaten army  
So, do not try with me your attempt  
To count the wounded and missing.

2

Letter, your dot was a winter's fire  
And smoke of a happy cigarette.  
Your dot was the suns caught in the hand,  
An ambiguous summer full of kisses  
And a sudden entrance to the happy nothingness.

3

After your parting,  
My death began as a mythical festival.  
When I asked about its name,  
I was boxed on my mouth  
Until my blood flowed.

4

Here I am!  
I have come back to you

Like an addict who decided  
For the thousandth time  
To give up drink  
And managed so every time!

5

After you was my mirror  
That smiled to my smile  
And got excited at my coming,  
You became my absurdity  
That seized me wherever it saw me  
Or whenever it remembered one letter  
Of my broken letters.

6

I do not conceal this secret from you;  
After you left,  
I turned into a sharp zero,  
An everlasting loss.  
I turned into poetry people loved  
But I did not.  
Because it was a bleeding  
Only an intensive bleeding.

7

I do not conceal this secret from you;  
After your green night,  
The nights became fragments.  
After your fresh bed

The beds were no more than deathbeds.  
After your room on the top  
The rooms rendered into basements.  
After your sharp kiss and honey saliva,  
The kisses became slain birds.  
And after your words as good as childhood,  
Words became artificial teeth.

8

After you left, time got lost  
And nobody knew where.  
I asked everything about everything  
But nothing answered me about anything.  
I published an advertisement  
In all the newspapers,  
Asking, where, where and where  
So, I was accused of mystery,  
Forgetfulness and nowhere.

9

I imagined women to be like you;  
Trees of green and fruit of gold,  
But my imagination was naked,  
And my nakedness was great.  
I imagined the towns to be like yours  
To be myths of black love, kisses of fire  
And stormy meetings like glassfuls of alcohol  
But I found them towns of dead people

Who communicated through barking  
And offered each other  
Nothing but bouquets of insults.



## *Fire and Sinbad*

### *Fire*

\*\*\*\*\*

Whose fire is that surrounding us  
As the torches surround a naked witch?  
Is it Hell's fire or Magi's fire?  
Is it yearning's fire or Al-Bassos fire\*?

### *Love*

\*\*\*\*\*

During the travels of my great illusion  
I tore up the dot of love.  
In it I found the blank space as white as death  
Or as black as the sun of a killed feast.

### *Letter*

\*\*\*\*\*

The letter is my heart's orchard and my blood's apple.  
The letter is my master,  
My blind old man who rolls me  
From one mountain to another  
From one desert to another  
From a drowning boat to another burning  
With wonderful beauty.

### ***Family***

\*\*\*\*\*

The drum is my blood.

The sea is my brother.

The travel is my sister.

The fire is my mother.

The letter is my sweetheart.

But who are you

You who keep screaming all the time: "Help! Help!"

Are you my son or my father?

### ***Comment***

\*\*\*\*\*

Miserable is Sinbad

For he fights boredom and death.

As for me, I have to fight boredom,

Death and fire.

Yes, I have to eat fire every morning

And cling to a drowning letter

To reach a land drowning every night

And floating every morning

Like Sinbad who became bored with himself

And with his home address.

\*\*\*\*\*

*\* It is a long pre-Islamic tribal war.*

## *Losses*

1

My losses are no longer unbearable.  
No sooner do I come out of a loss  
Then I fall into another.  
I – for example – died,  
Died a long time ago  
And had enough death.  
When I decided to rise from my death,  
Dressed green rather than black  
Ride the cloud instead of the bicycle,  
I was shocked  
By the corruption of the cloud  
And the tear of its underwear.

2

My losses are no longer unbearable.  
I have gone into fire and got burnt well enough.  
When I rose up from my ashes  
And gathered my ashes  
And sprayed in my blood  
Lest I might newly die,  
I was shocked to know  
That those who threw me into fire

Were my friends to whom  
I gave the light of the green  
And my beloved people to whom  
I granted the sun of the cloud.  
So, I got puzzled as I had not had  
Myself ready for the role of a redeemer.  
And I did not imagine that Judas's role  
Would be re-shown everywhere with great success.

3

My losses are no longer unbearable.  
When I thought over the names of cities  
I found them similar to death.  
And when I thought over the names of rains,  
Wounds, thunderbolts and women  
I grew puzzled  
Because my body that rose up  
From its death dozens of times  
And my heart that resisted  
The storm, the blood, and the gold  
Wept before me as two orphan children  
And complained to me of the lost dream.  
They screamed because of the lost dream,  
They went down streets like any crazy couple.  
So what else could I do but uncover;  
My losses are no longer unbearable  
No longer ... no longer ...unbearable.  
Thus I will uncover  
The rearrangement of the rivers,

Make them run from the south to the north  
To reduce my pains.  
I will rearrange the clouds  
Make them travel by mail  
To reduce my childhood's nakedness.  
I will rearrange the tears  
make them more mysterious  
To satisfy the longing of my gold towers.  
So nobody can observe my crying  
And nobody can rejoice at my disaster.

## *The Piper*

1

In the middle of a yellow, blue and orange cloud

I sat and looked at the world's greenness.

As it carried me,

Crossing from a time to a time

And from an age to another.

The cloud stopped.

A beautiful sound of the pipe was heard

Like a spring in the middle of summer.

The cloud stopped.

I had a look down

So that I might see the piper.

I imagined he was my father.

But he was not.

I imagined he was my son.

He was not.

Maybe it was I.

I was not.

He was nobody at all.

It was a beautiful, astonishing sound

Filling everything with pleasure and gold.

2

The cloud got tired.

I looked and found my father

Lying on a cloud ahead of me

And my son riding a cloud following me.

The cloud got tired from stopping.

So, it moved quietly to the end.

But our clouds,

Alas,

Started to lose their delightful colours

And became darker and darker.

## *An Attempt at Music*

1

Music is falling, falling  
Like a bird,  
A bunch of grapes,  
A waterfall.  
So my heart flies with the bird  
But my hand can not touch it.  
The bunch of grapes touches my lips  
But there is no love knife  
To cut our sharp emptiness.  
And the waterfall comes to me  
I become water to meet it,  
But I collide with its big stone and drown.

2

Even the letters made me worn-out.  
They are the only visitors in my biggest loneliness  
Who did not hold in their hands:  
A sun's bouquet,  
A handful of the moon  
Or kisses of feathers.

3

Everybody dressed in the clothes  
Of the other  
Except me.  
When I found nothing to dress in,  
I went out naked to the street  
Stark naked.

4

Music is falling  
With the nice letters 'L'  
Which are as sweet as children's lips,  
With the chirp letters 'R'  
The whispering letters 'S'  
And the dew of the letters 'N'.

5

Music is coming.  
I rise from death  
To meet it as two orphan children  
Sighing on the festival swing.

6

Since I had acquainted with my blood  
I found it surrounded by birds.  
Since I had acquainted with my heart  
I found it brimmed with alphabets.

7

Happiness is a ballet dancer  
And sadness is a Bedouin  
Making earth as a seat for him  
To play on the rebec.

8

My death was admired by me.  
But when I tried to repeat it  
I went crazy!

9

Music is falling, falling  
The soul gets lost  
Then vanishes.

10

Music melts as silver does.  
Music sleeps like lovers  
Tired by long parting  
And heavy abandonment.

11

What beauty!  
Music plays on  
And the letters blaze.

12

The rich man delights with the hotel's female slaves.

The singer delights with his new sweetheart.

But I, like music,

Seek delight only in myself

Only mix with my letters and dots.

13

How long will I be tortured

By the bleeding of letters;

The protest of the letters 'H'

The loss of the letters 'R'

In the memory of the lost cities,

The hypocrisy of the letters 'S'

The inversion of the letters 'B' until death?

My God,

How long will the bleeding of letters torture me?

## *Time Runs, Time Drowns*

1

Time runs, runs

As a thief hunted by a policeman

Drawing his big gun.

Time drowns

As a child breathing his last breaths

In front of us; the poor who have been created

Without hands and feet.

2

Time is an old man

As good as his white beard.

But when I wanted to bid him farewell

I was shocked by his room

Full of the remains of henna

Full of usurers, hangmen, and harlots

Together with their giggles, trifles and heavy breaths.

3

Time is my letters and dots

Surrounding me with clock's hands.

Time is my hours that search

In vain for two good arms,

Two lips compact with warmth and blossoms.

4

Time is an urn in which delight  
Was poured,  
Then set at my heart's shelf.  
But the black cats broke the urn.  
I did not go out to drive them off  
Because my heart died of bleeding,  
Died of delight.

5

Time is a woman who stripteases  
In front of the dogs with high backs,  
Strong and delightful as their lifted tails.

6

Time is a mother who dropped  
Her child from the iron bridge  
In fear of hunger.  
Thus her infant cried on his drowning brother  
For full forty years.

7

Time is a myth that we try to draw  
And modify by false colors  
And stick our naive poems  
On its ruined wall.

8

Time is my friends who died without reason  
Except that they puzzled a little  
In front of the ghost of love  
Or the ghost of death.

9

Time is a candle that does not give up  
Spreading darkness.  
And days that are seized and charged of striptease  
In the markets.

10

Time is a lute, a tambourine, and a pipe  
Drowning in the warmth of your song.  
That hunts me  
From one street to another,  
From one house to another.

11

Time is unbearable noise  
And infinite silly things  
And clack that deafens the ears.

12

Time is a bullet.  
You must quietly stand before its course  
So that it will get your good heart!

## *An Attempt at Madness*

1

The moon is at the door  
Hung by its feet.

2

Everybody became self-sufficient  
As a cut string.

3

Friends beget hither and thither  
Lies and trifles.

4

The meaning is imprisoned within itself  
None can redeem it  
Nor even I.

5

Those who died  
Had written well their destroyed poems.

6

Yesterday I died.  
In the morning I, as usual, woke up.

7

Hunger is a letter.  
All you need is to envelop it  
And send to you.  
Sorry  
To me.

8

The woman died: so did the dream,  
The sense and the dawn.  
Her death was an occasion for forty other disasters.

9

Madness is beautiful  
Because it is my post box full of birds  
And my future full of darkness.

10

My letters have protested  
Against the grief mountains in themselves.  
So I crushed them with a hand of steel  
With patience and horror.

11

The poet and the ruler died.  
The philosopher died  
And the historian died.  
When the fruit seller died  
The people, then, protested.

12

My only friend who survived  
Sent me a letter, full of serpents and owls.  
It filled my home with horror.

13

When I read my poems yesterday  
In a public celebration  
A large mass of audience was there  
I had never dreamt of.  
Over there, there was none  
But my heart,  
My table  
And my blood.

14

Your love is poetry of light  
And you- my sweetheart- are  
A she- prophet of darkness.

15

When I wrote your name, I became embarrassed.  
I madly loved its letters.  
I feared that people would behold them.  
Nay, I feared that I would behold them myself.

16

Where are you?  
Bring back to my blood Africa's drums,

Asia's follies  
And the phantoms of the lower world.

17

Your love has become a poem.  
All the crazy people of the Earth  
Are fond of it.  
How wonderful!

18

Your love has led my poetry  
To the essence of letters and dots.  
It has led me to superiority  
To superiority madness.

19

Th...  
The moon is at the door.  
It has lifted one foot!

## *An Attempt to Write*

1

The poet wrote the title of his poem.  
He was tired like a severed head  
Alone like a desert falling into the sea  
Lonely like a grave waiting for a corpse  
Stolen by thieves.  
When he attempted to write his poem  
The head besieged him  
The desert surrounded him  
The corpse and the grave mock him  
And the thieves captured him very happily.

2

Time is dust.  
The day is straw.  
The hour is an ash.  
When the poet caught  
The first letter of dust  
The first letter of straw  
The first letter of ash  
He turned into a letter without dot,

Without joy or fire.

3

I searched for my childhood in an old song.

I searched for it in the date palm of Babylon.

I asked Hilla's\* night about it.

I found it nowhere but in the palm of a child beggar

Sitting near an old bridge

Reaching out his hands to the frowning passers-by.

Now he laughs, then he weeps or sleeps.

4

The poet wrote his elegy

And searched for a listener but he found nobody

Only the Euphrates

Who listened and kissed it

And concealed it within his heart:

In the middle of mud and fish.

5

The woman is in the mirror.

The mirror is in the bathroom.

The bathroom is in the drum.

The drum is in the dinar.

The dinar is in poverty.

Poverty is my friend

Poverty is my lovers,

My people and my sun.

6

The poet wrote the address of his grief  
As well as the address of his post box;  
Bankrupted to death  
And the phone number of his pain.  
That he sent to the elegant magazines and newspapers.  
The magazines competed to publish these poems  
And to fill them with joyful colours.  
But they forgot to reply  
To the address of the bankrupt post box  
And to the phone number of his great pain.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* *Hilla: an Iraqi city near old Babylon.*

## *An Attempt to Voice*

1

Are the occasions of my loss and exhaustion  
So few to justify, my voice, that you also  
Become lost and exhausted?

2

You, my voice, were my throat's nightingale.  
Now as you have soared further away  
My throat has appeared to my eyewitness  
As a cold cage of iron.

3

Nobody can help me in my disaster.  
The doctors remained silent.  
The medicines became mute.  
The prayer trembled between my fingers.  
The only thing on the phone line was my tears  
Shouting: hello, hello.

4

As the pit of my grave deepens more and more  
The poetry I write grows deeper and deeper  
What an irony!

5

Friends, Pay attention!  
The nightingale flew away  
And the crow laughed.

6

When will you come down?  
Tell me: when will you come down?  
Or am in front of me  
Find myself dying member by member?

7

My voice, the bird, come down!  
I will not whip you as a slave.  
I will not let you thirst to death  
Nor shout at you as a mad man.  
I will not ask you to sing needlessly nor to protest  
Nor to part with the text  
When the text gets stupid.  
Light down, Bird!  
I will not let Sophocles pull out his creatures' eyes  
On the stage of my blood  
Nor At-Tawhidi \* burn his books every night  
In the desert of my dream  
Nor Al-Maarri \* die alone  
As I do  
And as you do.

\*\*\*\*\*

*\*At-Tawhidi is a great Arabic philosopher who burns his book at the end of his life.*

*\*Al-Maarri is a famous, blind Arabic poet.*

## *The Man*

1

Your name has the light of sun when rising  
At dawn through the universes of darkness  
Or the coast' brightness  
Dawns through the sailors' screams  
In the middle of the seas of darkness.

2

In suspect,  
I groped torn off limbs  
Searching for torn off limbs  
Calling your name.

3

The darkness absorbed me  
And the sea inside my chest flooded.  
I have not yet beaten the sea with my stick  
Nor have I drunk from the spring of wisdom.  
The sailors inside me screamed: where is the captain?  
I wept when I saw the people naked smiling around me.

4

Now erect

Your wall around me.

You, by your name,

The sea bottom shakes,

The stab deeply sinks,

The curse with two canines averts.

Grant me unsuspecting head

Not complaining of the horror of the wild waves.

Grant me two eyes,

A lip and two hands.

Tear out whatever hate or torture I have.

Now erect

Your wall around me.

You, who leaves me in suspect

To live, to die, and to be resurrected

So that to be buried

In the middle of the barking dead.

## *Small Poems*

1

Do not go further  
Than the children's table,  
Than the lofty joy's table,  
Than lofty date-palms,  
The duck's singing,  
The clay icons and the winds of herbs.  
Do not go further than the desert of jealousy,  
The blue sleep,  
The desert of white lime and the unkempt words.  
Do not go further than the body of vision.

2

What is the use of poems  
If they do not lead me?

3

I fear that my black moons will steal me.  
I fear that my black moons will leave me  
As a dead whale at the coast.  
I fear that I fear.

5

Do you remember who named you  
Who gave you the frustration and the play?  
Do you remember who gave you;  
Named you after the play' name?

6

Remind

Once the memory occurs to the mind.

Remind

My memory has gone like the dust of wild storm.

Remind

It has cut the trees of exile

And brought the birds' moaning.

Remind .... Who ...?

The memory!

7

My love is papers blown by wind; it is haunted by pleasure.

My love is papers for streets inhabited by strangers

And for streets as lost as estrangement.

My love is papers from black mud.

Papers refuse and migrate, sow or forget.

Papers for the past and desire.

Papers for jealousy and enchantment: white papers!

## *Dyad*

The kiss is a she-gazelle.

The date is two eyes, a Sahara and a gun.

The kiss is a love poem.

The date is a stab in the belly.

The kiss is a butterfly.

The date is golden fish.

The kiss is wonderful tenderness.

The date is a great bed.

The kiss is a feast.

The date is happy children

In the middle of streets

Full of horse-drawn carriages.

The kiss is vagueness.

The date is an attempt to decipher the puzzles.

The kiss is a lie.

The date is a false witness.

The kiss is separation.

The date is a song glorifying separation.

The kiss is a dead smile on a drunkard's mouth.

The date is a fragmented glass.

The kiss is a legend.

The date is a world legend conference.

The kiss is a waiting.

The date is the poems of waiting

Written in Cuneiform, Sanskrit and Arabic

On the Book of Existence.

The kiss is a blossom.

The date is a garden full of honey.

The kiss is a green beach.

The date is a poet who does not stop smoking hope.

The kiss is a star.

The date is the sky held by a she-lover's palm.

The kiss is a drowning person.

The date is a bottomless sea.

The kiss is your astounding eyelash.

The date is your smile that guides me

Every night to delicious death

And it does not leave me until the cock crows.

The kiss is the dot of your nuun\*  
Or the nuun of your lost dot.  
The date is an alphabet revealing  
The talismans of the world  
But they do not know how to bring you back home.

The kiss is friendship.  
The date is an engagement until death.

The kiss is a chair.  
The date is a bed.

The kiss is a key.  
The date is a body.

The kiss is a violin.  
The date is a love dance.

The kiss is a tear.  
The date is a swift shooting of rain wets  
Lovers in the pleasure garden.

The kiss is a cry.  
The date is a romantic plot.

The kiss is a green room.  
The date is closed curtains.

The kiss is a song.

The date is a singer, a composer and a poet.  
They all have cried  
Because of the beautiful tune and words.

The kiss is beautiful noise.  
The date is secret willow rows.

The kiss is a lost child.  
The date is a bride lamenting her bad luck.

The kiss is a daydream.  
The date is heresy and hallucination.

The kiss is a poem at its top level.  
The date is a collection of love poetry.  
Every line in it is your letter  
And every letter in it is your name.

The kiss is a window.  
The date is a country home  
Looking upon the sun and the duck.  
The kiss is a pleasure.  
The date is a call for writing on it  
As a cureless deep death.

The kiss is your dreamy eyes.  
The date is your lips; abandoning their  
Wonderful miserliness.

The kiss is a love hour.  
The date is a wedding night,  
The wedding candles  
And the bride's white dress.

The kiss is you.  
The date is you ..... of course!

\*\*\*\*\*

\* *Arabic letter.*

## *An Attempt to Fly*

1

The stork flew.

The stork of my childhood

Flew farther and farther.

But the meeting with it

Remained as a dream growing inside me

Like a growing fire in the crater of the volcano.

2

Alas! my ambiguous letters.

Alas! my lost women.

Alas! my masks that go on uncovering me.

Alas! my years that follow one another

Meaninglessly or almost meaninglessly.

Alas! my nakedness that surrounded me

Like soldiers surrounded an armless man.

3

In times of black chairs

Dreams to fly lessen every day

Lessen

Lessen

Until they become as small as a sand grain.

4

Who are you?

What makes me write to you my contemporary Iliad?

Uncover your selfishness

So that I can show you my orphanhood.

Uncover your miserliness

So that I can show my date palm.

Uncover your ambiguity and plots

So that I can show you my clearness and naivety.

Uncover your death

So that I can show my doomsday.

5

I am no more than a child

Who fell in the sea, the sea of letters.

So he drowned until the letters wept for it.

I am no more than a monk

Who saw a fresh white violet undressing

So he remained trembling all his life.

I am no more than a feather from a slain bird.

6

My stork,

When will you come so I can stop weeping?

When will you perch so I can stop my tears from welling up?

When will you perch so I can get happiness

In your warm beak,

And sense my boyhood

Laughing through the whiteness of your wonderful feathers?

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The stork is still hovering around my heart.

My heart which death, hunger and fire have confiscated.

My heart which the dream to fly has confiscated.

So what will I do

I who have no hands to speak with

Nor legs to fly with

Nor lips to remember with

Nor a memory for practising magic

Nor magic for catching my wonderful stork?

