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# Kingdoms: Kingdom I; Kingdom II; Kingdom III; Kingdom IV

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## *Mohammad Sulaiman*

### KINGDOMS

#### *Kingdom I*

Large as if a café  
Narrow as if a boutique  
In its space: brass  
Sulfur  
Vitriol  
And sweet basil.  
Its roof: dust and minarets reaching the clouds  
Its earth: motley  
Its water tinged with iron rust  
Its river charged to run between a wall  
And a wall  
Its suns idiotic  
Craving murder  
Out playing with children . . .  
Its flesh is subjected to thieves and strangers  
Its gate is at the sea  
And its limit at the end of speech.  
Once  
The raven was its god  
Once  
It colored itself for the Calf  
Confided in stones  
And danced with a frog  
And once  
It piled up in a soldier's helmet  
It did not beget its own river  
Clamoring is its daily bread  
Drowsiness its salt  
It has remained in the soldier's tent ever since it breathed  
It has remained large  
Its shirt a marsh  
And its people puppets.

*Kingdom II*

A withered star  
A distance for the sea  
Two blues  
Between their centers colors pour forth  
A street  
And a pile of white  
A wall: smoke on its cap  
And blood in its roots.  
From the vacancy of a window  
Rust overlooks diminutive curtains  
Chewed by the wind  
A balcony pledged to the ants  
A wooden hand over it  
And a hoopoe fluttering upwards  
And downwards  
A ship flung in the sea  
Unshaken by the creeping darkness  
Nor by the flutter  
Dust rises from its bones  
It is topped by ravens  
Surrounded by scripts  
Grass rodents  
A heap of tin cans  
And he who sought refuge from wilderness  
To sleep in the seashells.  
A street flows from a mantle  
Melting in iron  
Disappearing in the public square's hamper  
A lover with hands under his chin  
His darkness offers a sleeping refuge for the birds  
His back turned to the houses  
His face has two signs:  
A sign of fear  
And a sign of the pain of ascent  
Around his nose: the wreck of a smile  
And a torn moan.

*Kingdom III*

A door  
A table  
A ladder leading to the unknown  
A summer suit  
A coat for winter's needles  
A vessel on the hearth at the end of the passageway  
The bread is in the sack  
A turtledove in the corner of the tableau  
And a woman in the heart surrounded by soldiers  
Her eyes are possessed by the riddle  
Her breasts rounded  
Her brown hair catches butterflies  
Soldiers in trenches surround her!  
Yet she appears to laugh with the one she lured.  
In the evening  
When God hides the lamp behind his back  
She bends  
And rubs her eyes  
Releasing butterflies and grass-grazing deer  
She crosses the passageway  
Dragging the children from distant beds  
She washes the cups  
Resurrects life in the dead hearths  
Awakening the flame  
She fills the glowing vessel with figs  
Or warms the breadloaf  
She pours coffee in the cup for the prophet  
And milk for the cat stiffened at the door  
Then she disrobes  
Shaking off the dust from the town  
And nestling on the throne  
She opens the doors for the one she lured  
She becomes the Buraq  
He mounts her and gyrates splitting the clouds  
And flinging his pillar in the sea  
Her cheek becomes a peach  
Her mouth a butterfly fluttering over a body

Crowned with heat  
Her bosom a pillow  
Her hair a bird sanctuary.  
In the morning the soldiers fire their suns  
She deserts the bed  
Covers herself with leaves  
And seeks refuge under the banner of the dead.

*Kingdom IV*

A radiant foreigner  
Stole away from the nordic blue  
Across the sea.  
She walked into his café  
Nestled in his healing name  
At his feet she threw her robe  
Crown  
And the peaceful country  
Her back was dotted with freckles  
Her breasts: two pomegranates  
And fire beneath the skin  
But the tongues were at variance  
His throne was of fronds  
His robe filled with grass  
His hand empty  
He was drowsing on his drugged staff  
Having thrown his pouch behind his back  
When she arched herself like a cat  
Then leapt  
Empowered by a storm-body  
She knelt down  
She prostrated herself  
Wrapping herself with his on-fire flesh  
She bent over him  
Licked with her eyes and tongue  
She twirled and stormed

In the darkness  
She turned into a cake rounding a pole  
And in her space  
He discharged peace  
Crushing the grass that blocks the palace gate  
Then perforating the wall  
Upwards and downwards  
Blessing the garden  
Shaded with his towering fountain.  
In his café  
The hoopoe was still astray  
Rehearsing a nocturnal tale  
Or gathering letters from a cavern  
Putting the letter Nuun  
Next to the letter Jeem  
Or blocking a road by a road  
Perhaps the jinni is still swimming and searching  
And perhaps . . .  
But I see the foreigner becoming a road  
And a dome for the falcon's nap  
Will she remain under his feathers  
To be deflowered at night  
In the morning  
And at high noon, which drives the steeds of heat?  
Or will she suddenly long for the sea  
And the coldness sedimenting in its depths?  
Perhaps she will age  
Or he will age  
Winter may leap into the tale  
And nomadism may insert its teeth  
She may become the end of the record  
Or its opening.