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Writing Sample

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Laila Neihoum

Poems

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

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

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

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

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

* August 1999

Headquake

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

* August 1999

Staining whiteness

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

Butterflies of Meaning
-----------------------------------------------
A poet's horizon
Is filled with butterflies
That's Afaf
And Sakina, sending
her early morning messages
to my sleepy day,
Yussef the nonchalant
do worry at last
when doing the same
but Zeinab helped me
to decide.
Clicking is the decision
then she flew
like a summer cloud
doing what she did.
What about Amal
Clicking her cell phone
Even in dreams
Ringing makes her rush
A beautiful ebony running
With her soul in her mouth
Hello!!!
Lifting the phone
The cell. What I's in there?
listening
a dreamy smile
lightning glows on her lips
this girl loves calling
knows her choices
but naughty Sakina
knows what to send me
knows what gets me to bounce
Like on a trampoline
like grandchildren
Bouncing on our grandma’s bed
-I am in Roxi, she says
God!!
What delicious mango juice
A Barbecue smell
Smiley passers-by
In what engulfing happiness
Am I!!
Deleting all redundant memories
Am I!!
And how the Nile goes by
Opening its nocturnal maze
Crowded with anchored restaurants,
Cafés,
Pass them and me by
So I remember lovely colors,
Enticing sea smells,
More than happy memories
and Sakina pulling my trembling hand
To cross Sallah Salem Street,
A Highway?
No way Sakina !!
No way!!
Now! Or a flattened death!!
Cross NOW!!
Shouts loudly over the noise.
I run, my eyes closed,
As well as my senses
to Cairo International Book Fair.
So she is in Roxi!!
To my memories of colorful fish
Sharm al-Sheikh shores
Coral- decorated undersea
A small yacht
Sailing on Tiran’s horizon
Passing a private light house
Where I once climbed breathlessly
We wave
I see what others can’t see
I adjust my hat’s angle
Straining my eyes
Giving myself to the Red Sea breeze
To turquoise waters
To Ahmed’s camera seizing the moment
So she is in Roxi
And Afaf’s butterflies
Crowding around my thoughts' light
My thoughts that are traveling away
Traveling away.

[Roxy—a shopping mall in Cairo]

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

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