Writing Sample

Gulala Nouri

Includes "STONE MUMMY," "OPTIMISM" and "BLACKNESS."

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

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

BLACKNESS

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

Iraq-Kirkuk

Translated from the Arabic by Khaled Mattawa

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