MY BELOVED RISES FROM HER SLEEP

MAHMOUD DARWEESH: 1942-

My childhood takes, in the palm of her hand,  
Her adornment from everything...  
And nothing  
Grows with the wind except memory.  
If the foggy recollections which amassed  
Around my childhood picture were counted  
They would amount to a week of arrogance  
Preceded by many insignificant years  
And borrowed from yesternight’s provisions...

The day I rolled down every door  
Resigned to the busy world  
My fingers moaned: Don’t throw out  
The daughter of my day to the long road.  
The eviction card in my hand  
Was a black olive tree,  
And this land  
A guillotine whose blade I adore.  
If you kill me, time will not say:  
I saw you!  
The Relief Agency will not  
Ask for the date of my death, nor will  
The grove change its olive trees;  
The months will not drop their November!

My childhood takes, in the palm of her hand,  
Her adornment from every day...  
And nothing  
Grows in the wind except memory.  
And I remember her reflection  
In the early days when  
Lightning crowned her forehead. But  
I suppress the memory because the evening  
Oppresses the heart at its door...  
I bequeathed all my fingers
To beams of light lost in her sleep.
And when my beloved leaves
Her dream, I will know the road of day
I will walk the road of day.

My beloved is a composite
Of all the women of the pure tongue...
   When Spring arrives
The roses perish from her breast
From every garden, dreaming of returning.
And I remain lost in her body
The smell of earth that never perishes.

My beloved is a composite
Of all the women of the bleeding tongue...
   Her moons are in the sky
And the roses burn on her breast
With the lust of death because the evening
Is a bird in the conqueror’s coat
And I remain absent from her mind
Frequenting it at every death...

My beloved is a composite
Of all the women of the sleeping tongue...
   She dreams that the day
Is on the pavement of the approaching night
Sucking darkness from the night and defeat
From the honor of a soldier and a whore.
She dreams that the demon which is borrowed
From our sleep is an ancient lie
And that our prison cell has
No walls, that the dream is mud and fire.

My beloved is a composite
Of all the women of the lost tongue...
I searched eyes for her
But didn’t find her.
I didn’t find in the trees
Her greenness...
I searched prisons for her
But found only the moon’s daughter.
I didn’t find her heartbeat.