

Arabic Poetry in Iraq

Selected, Introduced and Rendered into English

by

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KUWAIT

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Introduction

These are selections from the better known Iraqi poets, who spanned the 20th century, and their poems were published mainly in collections of *diwans*, as early as the 1920's. Some of these poems were composed by younger people who, nevertheless, may reflect the spirit of an earlier age. I have arranged the poems mainly in chronological order of their publication, though not necessarily with regard to the age of the poets. Conversely, some poems may be found to reflect a later development in style and spirit of the poetry, though the poet may, otherwise, relate to an earlier age.

Not many readers may like the selection of poems, unless they, themselves, have made those selections. This is inevitable, when you have such God's plenty of poetry, in a country where poetry is the daily bread of the people, and where, especially in the southern regions of Iraq, people "breathe" poetry from and into the air around them. The concern with "traditional" and "modern" poems should not be taken very seriously, when considering a spectrum of an entire century. These poems are "aspects" and "facets" of 20th century poetry in Iraq. It is a cornucopia of poems, and one can choose and pick.

Some of these poems, especially those of the older poets, were written in the "traditional" two hemistiches style. But the majority, especially those of the later half of the century, were written in the "foot-based" style, wrongly called "free verse." When the pioneer Iraqi woman poet, Nazik al-Mala'ika, published a poem entitled "Cholera" in 1947, she dubbed it "free poetry" which she knew best, it was not the "free verse" of Walt Whitman and

Leaves of Grass of 1855. It was a poem "based" in a "foot" of Arabic prosody, though the rhymes were varied as well as the "length" of the lines, which were only "free" from the traditional count of feet in the two hemistiches poems. "Free verse" proper, which is neither metrical nor rhymed, is not included in this selection, as it falls outside the Arabic concept of poetry, despite some interesting examples.

That takes us to the thorny tracks of translation. An Italian renaissance dictum dubs translators as traitors: Traduttore, traditore! They do not convey the text to another language faithfully and honestly. The American poet Robert Frost (1874 - 1963) said that "poetry is that thing which is lost in translation." In our Arabic tradition, more than twelve centuries ago, al-Jahiz said, "poetry cannot be translated, otherwise, its glamour will be lost..." Yet, some kind of "rendering" into English, in the words of Edward Fitzgerald (1809 - 1883) the "traitor-translator" of The Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam, may be desirable for those who speak English, and would rather see what the Arabic poetry in Iraq looks, or sounds like.

My present rendering into English of these poems has kept to the "meaning" first, emulating the "glamour" of the Arabic expression, were that possible at all. The prosodic feet I tried to emulate in the iambic, mostly coming near the ballad metre. Sometimes the rhyme was introduced with as little affectation as the original allowed. A sort of blanc verse, mainly of five feet, or rather of ten syllables, offered some help, too.

The poems of the traditional two-hemistich lines fell into two lines in English. But the poems of the "foot-based" style allowed a rearrangement in order to keep closest to the meaning and appeal of the poems.

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(1) Jameel Sidqi al-Zahawi (1863 - 1936)

1.In Iraq

I have suffered a great deal in Iraq.
I was in paradise, experiencing hell.
He who prolonged my sufferance there
Was a foe who could make me suffer.
What justice could come from one who,
Out of spite, sees justice is to be unjust?
I had no sin except that I,
Hoped to free my nation by my poems.
A free man may betray life by his own hands,
But he may not betray the conscience.



They imprisoned the minds of those who have them,
And gave them no chance to think.
They hit with the sword they have sharpened
Both our parliament and constitution.



Statesmen of the east, wherever they may be,
Are a team where no one can manage a thing.
They fall voraciously to the food
Then they complain of stomach ache.

(12 October 1930)



2. Song of the Drowned

“Victims of the Titanic”

We have no fear when death comes near
For we are, all destined for to die.
Our ship will go deep down with us
In waters of a rising fear.
The waters through a hole gushed in
And made the ship too weak to float.
The barque, the sailor did not sin,
The blind fate sinned and sank the boat.
We all within await the death,
The tail competing with the head.
If we withdraw from it a breath
That would be cowardice and dread.
You giant, overflowing height
Like giants must your hit be proud.
Entomb us in your breakers' might,
We all are waiting for the shroud.
We welcome death, where it comes from,
Since there is no escape for us.
We do not care, when death does come,
If here or there it falls on us.
There is between us but one step
And we shall take it, ones and twos.

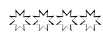
Here is the sun so bright went up,
O what a charming sight to please!
Would you let us enjoy its light
Before we are to close the eyes?!
Despair, like violent windy flight
Extinguished hopes which could not rise.
No one but in the end should die,
Their destiny cannot be waived,
The soul is pained at every sigh,
And to its body always chained.
Our homelands we have left behind,
Our homelands we shall never see.
The news our people soon shall find
And mourning day and night will be.
As if the day we bade farewell
We boarded ships of destiny.
The dead cannot suffer the swell
Of pain as living agony.
The life of man is but a wake,
Between two painful spells of sleep.
We still that life so dearly take
And cannot but forever keep.
We shall depart, and when death knocks
The sunshine will no longer greet.
So farewell world, the sea now rocks,
We shall depart with nimble feet.

(16 August, 1913)

3. Heralds of Change

"Presented at the Women's Conference"

After waiting for decades,
She revolted, and tore up the veil.
Arabian, who finally knew
How to cast off what deludes.
The veil was tyrannizing her,
And tiring her with loads of pain.
History will ask those tyrants
To come up with their account.
She asked them for her liberty
But she did not receive any answer.
And when she gave up every hope
She tore up, with her hands, the veil.
When freed and unveiled she beheld
Before her open fields of glory.
She went ahead, a stormy gale,
And that was all the best for her.



Well done, Arabian daughter, you
Have chosen what is best in life.
You had enough of sufferance,
Enough distress has come your way.
Stagnant life and submission

Will only lead to perdition.
In our age all that life needs
Is utter change, an upheaval.
Heralds of that change are seen
Hopes are raising hopes thereon.

(25 October, 1932)

(2) Abdul-Muhsin al-Kazimi (1871 - 1935)

Onward, Onward

(Presented at a meeting of the Syrian Union Party, 21 February, 1919)

Let us go then, all together
Go apace this eve and morn.
Let us go in ones and twos.
For the aims, the group is better.
Let us not lose our purpose
When a trivial day looks serious.
And if someone fell behind
And the nearness turned so distant,
Then the sword in a mighty hand
May sever though 'tis not so sharp.
No one ever feared a weakness
If he tightened his resolve.
A suspect may inspire some news
Unknowing what harm he has done.
A sound opinion may oppose
Another one which is more sound.
Who had seen a sharpened sword
Blunting a much sharper one?
Let your delegations march
To those heights one after one.
So the world will see who are

Better guided, who are lost.
O for one who would enliven
His resolve or else destroy it.

(3) Ma'roof al-Rusafi (1875 - 1945)

1. O My People,

O my people, do not speak
For speech is now taboo.
Fall asleep, and never wake,
The sleepers only will succeed.
And retreat from all that means
That you must advance ahead.
Leave understanding aside:
To do this will do you good.
And be fast in ignorance,
It is evil if you learn.
You leave politics aside,
Otherwise you will regret.
Politics has some secrets,
That can never be unravelled.
If you speak in some detail,
Then mumble indistinctly.
Justice, do not wait to see.
On injustice you should not frown.
If among you there is one
Who today seeks dignity,
Let him be without hearing

Without sight, without a mouth.
None deserves the dignity
But the deaf man, and the dumb.
And leave happiness aside,
In this life, it is a dream.
For the graceful life is like
One which is so harsh and bleak.
What the time ordains, accept,
Tyranny though it may be.
If unjustly treated, then
Laugh in glee, do not complain.
If insulted, then give thanks,
And when slapped you have to smile.
If they tell you that your honey
Is bitter, say: colocynth!
If they tell you that your morning
Is a night, say: gloomy dark.
If they say: 'your oozing water
Is a torrent', say: deluge.
If they say that your homeland,
O people, will be divided
Then give thanks, and give more praise,
Then sway around with mirthful song.

****□

2.Complaint to al-Raihani

(from a poem recited at the reception held for Ameen al-Raihani on his visit to
Baghdad in September 1933)

O Ameen! You came to Iraq
To see the signs of its glory.
Pardon! But that star has set,
And caused the fighting to prevail.
Don't you see pleasant Iraq
With more waste than peopled land?!
Glory of that land is gone,
Time has shrouded it with languor.
If you inspect the hearts of men,
Then look with widely open eyes.
You see dispersed the hearts of men,
Dissention is found everywhere.
In times of danger disagreed
In a way none can describe.
Neighbours suspect one another,
A friend is not sure of his friend.
People of the Qur'an say
What Bible people would avoid.
If one interprets what they say
He would be shunned as infidel.
And should a learned man discuss

— | | —

Their plight, they call him ignorant.
Such is their state: if the wise
Through all that time could not explain.
Who can ever bring a change? My fiery poems
Gave up on them. I swear to that!
For ignorance will spare them not,
The sword does not pity the dead.
O Ameen, do not be angry,
I claim nothing without a proof.
How can Iraq hope for progress
When those who hold it have their way?
No good is there in one's homeland,
When cowardly hands possess the sword,
And miser men possess the gold;
When the outcast has opinions,
And the ignorant knows all,
And the rule in foreign hands,
When a few control so many,
Who are humbled by those few?!

(4) Muhammad Rida al-Shabibi (1889 - 1965)

1. Damascus and Baghdad

(Composed in 1918, when the British in Iraq announced that it was themselves, not the Arab forces, who liberated Damascus.)

What is intended for us, and for these homelands?
Damascus was lost, and before it was Baghdad.
From the land of nativity started, hurried
Noble steeds; their destination was Damascus.



Red-faced foreigners have thwarted our unity,
And disrupted normal movement and relations.
Every aspect of the East is fully blackened,
Not Iraq alone is now the land of blackness.
The feasts in our East have all become obsequies,
While for our enemies they are feasts to enjoy.



Our foes paralyzed our rallies, so we dispersed,
Eastwards and westwards, like flocks of camels astray.
One of them is as a multitude, appalling,
While a multitude of us is disregarded.
Day after day, the foe becomes by us more feared,
And gains more supremacy in our midst, and might.



2. False Praise, Vain Flattery

People deviate-may we be saved such sin -
By false praise, and untrue vain compliments:
Too gloomy a face they would call a moon,
Too ugly a form they would dub so fair.
O you who wants to reform our morals,
O reformer, the malady is here.
All of us do covet what is not ours,
All of us commit that, even myself.
We may be so tempted by fields so green,
Fields that yesterday were only dunghills.
Woe to you our age! Wake up, you are still
An age of high sounding titles and names.
People have branded others with what they
Only heard about them, and close their eyes,
So my ear was transformed into an eye,
My eye into an ear - just like the rest.
We inflict injustice upon ourselves,
We do that then say: "Who brought us that harm?"
People have reached their objectives, indeed,
We too reached them, but with wishful thinking.
Our right was missed by a party forlorn,
They blamed not themselves, but they blamed the times.
You are a party that has lost a deal

In buying shame and selling the homeland.
You sold it so cheap; if you were offered
This whole world, it would be a petty price.
O you slaves of money, better than you
Are the ignorant, who worship idols.
I am that Iraqi who remembers
Damascus, whose soul yearns for dear Yemen.
And I consider Najd as my garden
And look at Aden as my paradise.

(5) Ahmad al-Safi al-Najafi (1897 - 1977)

1.Apprehensions

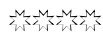
The West has come to raid us with its sins
We leave the faith, the world, and follow the west.
But I remained alone in world of soul
In me the East its best features has left.



The shackles I married, despite myself
Divorcing them will only come with death.
Shackles I knew since I was bound as child
And that taste I still feel in my palate.



O money! Donor of titles and ranks
Until when will you grant all fools those ranks?!
'Tis such a shame for honour that you be
The means of spreading knowledge and the arts.
Glory is on the other bank and there's
No way to cross but on a bridge of gold.



You, picker of thorns, pitying humans
Pick out of the thorns what they call human.
Better the thorn that pierces my bleeding foot
Than one which pierces souls and sight.



Many a thorn is deep down in the soul
Whose prick in the soul disturbs it always.
Thorns in my foot disturb, so I pull them out,
But tell me how to pull them out of the soul?



Bodily clothes have no value except
In as much as the wearers need them.
Beauty of the clothes means nothing to me,
For that beauty is the seers' concern.



I do my best to look at books' faces,
To shun the looking at people's faces.



A rose has stunned my mind by its beauty,
So I touched it, and the petals dispersed.
I wish my hands could be cut off
If my touching the rose were to disturb the roses.
O breeze, you may cuddle, but refrain from
Touching roses. Leave that to the longing souls.



They said that death is sickness with no cure.
What sickness has accepted any cure?
I said that death can not have any cure,
For death in this life is its own cure.



We opened the eyes to the world and they saw
Corruption dominates the whole existence

What a pity! We grow, and grow our minds
With understanding the world, then we die...
As if the Lord Almighty brought us here
To witness the scene of farce and then we go.

□

2. God and Mind

Were the mind to prevail over its Lord,
Then the mind would only mean ignorance.
The mind may go against the Creator
While some of His creations is the mind.
If in its creation the mind excels,
Then excellence is the Creator's work.
I worshipped Him, not knowing His essence,
For how can the part conceive the Whole?
I only knew He was my Creator,
And that I was a shadow of His sun.



Solitude pleased me, sitting in its shade,
Avoiding chattering on this and that.
God requite my leg for being so weak,
As it had stopped me from leaving the house.



I read some mediocre literature,
So my heart bursts and my patience expires.
I feel sorry I have wasted my time,
The light of my eyes, and my valued thought.
If ever judges could be set for literature,
I would demand some damages for all my loss.



In both my youth and in old age I have
The problem of exaggeration.
I never was content with any jest,
But now no earnestness can satisfy.
I frown on time when time would smile at me,
And dismiss luck when luck would follow me.
No farces in the world may make me laugh
They may exaggerate and make me cry.

(6) Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri (1903 - 1998)

1.Pricks

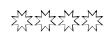
Silence took too long for some reason.
We hope it may come to some good.
They said wait one day, or one month,
So how did it turn to be years?!
Between today and tomorrow
Iraq was taken by some doubts.
Don't you find in what I say
Opposition on my part.
I wonder, was he annoyed,
My "master," or satisfied?!



One aeroplane in my country
Is enough to solve "the problems".
And a handful of that gold
Will pull down all the "monuments".
Does the master of the "matter"
Want something and we argue?
We want a new situation
But without the childbirth pangs.
My people this way and that
Is a plunder prearranged.



I complain about my loss,
But complain against the guards.
What did my country harvest
Out of all this cultivation?
As for me, my head is void
Of any contemplation.
And there is no movement left
In my ever throbbing heart.
O my judge and my opponent
Sentence me the way you like.



Are you planning for my people
Some conspiracy everyday?!
Good luck to you, you have eaten
Even the bones of the prey.
Even "the hen" is refusing
To condescend and to rule it.
She said: "in my ovary
Of yellowness and of white
Lies a "cabinet" in which
I was thrust against my will."



I thought I had seen some water,
But when I swam for so long,
I found nothing but mirage.
It was but the worst to drink.
I desired so many things,
But was not given the least.

Life is arid, yet we have
Hopes revolving round lush gardens.
So, about the Tigris and
The Euphrates chant me your hymns.

****□

2.Lullaby for the Hungry

Sleep, you hungry people, sleep,
May the gods of food protect you!
Sleep, and if not satisfied
With the wake, then with the sleep.
Sleep on foamy promises,
Kneaded into honeyed speech.
Sleep, you will be haunted by
Mermaids in your dreams at night.
You will see the disc of bread
Like the circle of the moon.
And will see your spacious sties
Paved with luxurious marble.



Sleep and gain some health, for good
It is to sleep in times of woe.
Sleep on spears with poisoned tips.
Sleep on swords with sharpened blades.
Sleep until the Day of Judgment,
Until it is allowed to rise.
Sleep above the marshy lands
Swarming with the muddy waves,
Laden with the scent of daisies,
Heightened by the lily breath.

Sleep on the tunes of mosquitoes,
As it were of cooing pigeons.
Sleep in such a lovely nature
That is vying with Miami!
Sleep, because "the naked state"
Granted you the bridal robes.
Sleep and dream of women reapers
Quite uncovered to the waist.
Hopping all around, as whips
Slash them with a whizzing sound.
Dally with the soft and creeping
Insects, dally with the flies.
Sleep upon the bed of harm,
Rest your cheek upon the sand,
Make your mattress out of pebbles,
Make your quilt the shady cloud.
Sleep, the "starver of the people"
Put an end to fasting days.
Sleep, the "god of war" is now
Tuning up the songs of peace.

□

3. Effeminate Youth

Who would tell the generations
That some young men use eyeliner!
They wear lipstick, even rouge!
Are they dandies in their new robes?
Pampered, wealthy sentimentals,
Like lush branches gently sway.
I saw, I wish I could not see
Bands of effeminate youth
Gaily wandering around
Pushing shoulders impudently
There, where there's no sign of shame
While the prisons rise so high.

□

4. Good Tigris

Your banks I greeted from a distance, so
Greet me back, good Tigris of the orchards.
I greeted, thirsty, asking for refuge
Like homing pigeons, between water and banks.
O good Tigris, fountain I had to leave
Unwillingly, though every now and then.
Clear water springs I would often approach
Fount after fount, yet never satisfied.
O nimble bark, swaying with the wind
Like tender branches, swaying with the breeze.
I wish that fluffy sail could be my shroud,
My winding-sheet, the day my end arrives.
O good Tigris, degraded are our hopes,
The least of our hopes is not secured.
Can you secure a refuge for me there,
Among the flowers or among the weeds?!
Free from care, except of the throbbing one
Under the chest, a soul, which is my care.
It shakes me, so I go along, and then
Hurries me, like a wind hurries the mills.

****□

(7) Hafiz Jameel (1908 - 1984)

1. Poetic Salutation*

Guests of Baghdad, this is the Baghdad face:
Chapters of heroism and glory.
Time has not penned lines like its history
On slates eternal, or ages' records.



Youth of Iraq, may God be with such youth
Who inherited forefathers' glory.
The disperser has come to look for gain,
Be careful not to be a hunter's bait.
Your past is not free from disunity,
Stirred by rivals, or sown by wicked hands,
Discern the faces of your enemies,
They have devils' spirits and gowns of monks.
Suffice wicked egotism the harm
It did to Iraq and all the Arabs.
So bring together your scattered parties,
You were not born for enmities and spite.
You are our own, the fountain of our hearts,
We don't barter one child for another.
Your foes are not deterred in, your dissent,
To beat you all, when each is fighting each.

*** Presented in the poetry fair in Baghdad, 1965.**

2. Lebanon

Let the insistent tears flow ever more;
You have none but Lebanon for your cure.
You tried patience! Can the gaunt be patient
When he is so near to his journey's end?!

You tried all who have taken care of you,
But could not find one more tender to you.
Lebanon was your bower in your youth,
In old age, it is your shelter secure.
Who, when calamities should befall you,
Is better succour, and of sincere help?!

In times of crises, it is your armour,
And if harm befalls you, it is your sword.

(8) Nazik al-Mala'ika (1923 -)

1. Between the Jaws of Death

[The poet was afflicted with a severe fever which caused her to write this sad poem, in which she bids farewell to life and prepares to meet the dark world]

O sad summer evening, my love withered
For what you bear of grief and of terror.

I grew quite bored with your stillness and shades
And substituted them with these, my tears.

No more passion inside my heart is left
For your darkness. So, pity my sick heart.

Have mercy, O darkness, silence, secrets,
On the frightened and unlucky throbbler.

Here I lie under the dark night, a soul
So terrified, in a frame so fragile.

The cries of fever have destroyed my dreams,
The dreams of my heart, chagrined and depressed.

O eyes of the stars, do not peep at me,
Your luster has no more delight for me.

Stretch out your hands, with tenderness, O winds,
And gently, on my mouth and my forehead.

Here I am, between the two jaws of death,
A heart, still throbbing with the love of life.

Two eyes, thirsty for the worldly pleasure,
And yearning to the evenings' attractions.

I am still a bud on the branch of time,
Fresh in its hopes and its aspirations.

It is a pity now, O death, that you
Should bury my youth in the world of death.

2. The Cholera

The night is calm.
Listen to the beats of moaning echo,
In the depth of darkness, under silence, over those who died.
Screams are rising, intermingling,
Grief is pouring out in flames,
Stumbling are the echoing sighs.
Boiling is in every heart.
In the quiet hut is sorrow deep.
Everywhere a soul is screaming in the dark,
Everywhere a voice is crying:
This is what the death has torn.
Death, O Death, O Death!
O the grief of River Nile screaming of what death has done.

The dawn is up.
Listen to the beat of steps,
In the silence of the dawn, hark, and look .
At the procession of the weepers
Ten are dead, nay they are twenty;
Don't you count, but hark and listen to the weepers
And to that pathetic child.
The dead, the dead, the count is lost.
The dead, the dead, no more tomorrow.

Everywhere there is a corpse by the stricken is bewailed.
There is no moment of quiet, or of silence.
This is what the hand of death today has done.
Death, O Death, O Death.
Humanity complains about what death has done.

The Cholera ...
In the cave of horror and remains,
In the steady, cruel silence where the only cure is death,
The Cholera woke up,
A spiteful, pouring rancour,
Went down the pleasant happy vale,
Screaming and disturbed and mad,
Unaware of weepers' screams.
Everywhere its claws left traces,
In the hut of woman peasant, in the house,
Nothing but the screams of death is heard.
Death, O Death, O Death!
In the cruel image of cholera death is taking its revenge.

Bitter is the silence.
Nothing but the echo of the prayer call.
The digger of the grave is also gone. There is no help.
The prayer-caller in the mosque is dead,
Who will then the obsequies perform?
Nothing left but moans and sighs,
The child is left without his parents,
Weeping of a burning heart

And he will be a prey tomorrow in the jaws of vile disease.
You left nothing, cholera phantom,
Nothing but the grief of death.
Death, O Death, O Death!
O Egypt! What the death has done has lacerated all my feelings.
(from *Sparks and Ashes*, 1947)

□

3. Enamoured River

"Composed during the horrible flood of 1954"

Where should we go?
It is racing toward us,
Running past the fields of wheat
And not abating any step.
With open arms it is advancing
At the early break of dawn.
Leaping, like the wind, enraptured,
Both its hands will meet us then
Fold up our fear along.



Racing, racing, it is racing,
Going throughout every village without sound,
With its brownish waters raiding
And no dam can ever stop.
Running after us desiring
To fold up our youthful days,
In between its arms, then give us
All its tenderness to drink



It did not give up the chase,
But it gives a smile of love,
While its feet, all wet, have left
Their reddish traces everywhere.

It caused a havoc east and west,
And did it, too, with tenderness.



Where shall we run? It has clasped
Its hands around the city shoulders.
It acts so slow, so firm, so calm,
As kisses of red clay it pours
To cover pastures with its gloom.



That lover we have known of old.
It does not halt its creeping to our lands.
For it we have built up our bowers,
It is our accustomed visitor,
So generous, as it comes down
To meet us every year in our valley.



For it we have emptied our huts at night.
It shall be our guest, but we shall go.
It follows us in every stretch of land.
For it we offer prayers.
For it we pour complaints
About the boring life.



It has become a god.

Have not our buildings washed their feet

With all its waters?!

It rises, and it casts its treasure to their hands.

It grants us mud, and death we cannot see.

Who else but that one now we have?

(from Moon Tree, 1954)

(9) Khalid al-Shawwaf (1924 -)

1. The Uprising*

Never beaten by fire was your mighty spirit,
Like yesterday, your glorious day is dignified.
Whenever you are called to sacrifice, would flow,
In profusion, from your arteries, precious blood.
My people! As it has always been your custom,
You cannot bear too long the brunt of injustice.
Pride is your gown, which was never soiled or tainted
By any harm, or ever discoloured by dust.
They failed who thought you would yield to humiliation,
Which they slowly prepared, and gave you to swallow.
They thought the shackles may weaken your strong resolve.
Whenever a shackle rustles, others resound.
O what a huge misconception whose poor echoes
The great heroic acts have winnowed and dispersed.
The shackles are much too weak to weaken a hand
Wherein the bleeding wound is burning for revenge.
Within your sides, of them there is a fiery brand,
Whenever they say it faded, a spark would flare.
Internal fire of the wronged will never subside
Despite the passage of the days and nights and years.

* **The uprising of the people in support of the national parties and their demand for reforms in November, 1952.**

****□

2. The Pen*

Lebanon! No wonder they have so fast arrived;
They are your folks, and around Lebanon have met.
My faith is in the robust pen that gathered them,
Like pilgrims at their holy place, they assembled.
My faith is that all ties without it are so frail,
And every gathering without it is a waste.
The countries, that their delegates to you have sent,
Are thought to be but one land in Lebanon eyes.
Don't think the pen a quill made out of cane or reed,
As it is a tongue, a throbbing heart and a hand.
It is a beacon, that burns for the whole people,
And not a star that glows only in one small sky;
A sentry, by the water source, alert, on guard;
And like a lion that defends his water fount;
A bugle-blower, through his horn he brings to life,
Before doomsday, the dead who in their graves are laid;
An adviser, trusted about the ways of good
An exposé of evil pits, and a warner.
When it supports the right, immediately will fall
A pillar of injustice, or a wicked pole.

*** Presented at the first conference of Arab writers held at Bait Merry,
Lebanon, 1954.**

(10) Atika Wahbi al-Khazraji (1924 - 1996)

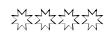
1. College Farewell

I tasted the sweet cup of poetry from her lips.
It quenched a flame that inside my heart was flaring.
How fair the world is near you, and how sweet the love;
How tender the meeting, and how happy the heart!
O Home of Knowledge! For you I was so blamed
By my folks; suffered injustice, or even war.
My folks, may God forgive them, threatened that I won't
Taste the pleasure of being with you, or near you.
But that blame made me feel even much more in love,
When the enthralled is blamed, he will be more enthralled.
They did enhance my passion, thinking that you were
Forgotten; how can that be, while the heart refused?!
Your love defied my folks; did not regard their right,
My passion went rolling to you with leaps and bounds.
It was a meeting that the world has rarely seen,
And a parting, the likes of which was never seen.

****□

2. Meeting and Silence

Why can't he return the greeting,
That monk, whose name runs in my bones?
I loved him, before love was born,
A love like dreams, during my sleep.
He often peeped like a vision,
And snatched me in the wake of dreams.
Complaining of what we then felt,
Gave short relief, like passing clouds.
A monk who allows no greeting;
Was this dictated in Islam?



Why can't he visit a sick heart,
That puzzled medicine and all men?!
Long they have taken it around,
Perplexed, and guessing all around.
Suggesting a cure, not knowing
An ailment that misled the probe.
The very cure is you, so would
A look from you revive the breath!



(11) Badr Shakir al-Sayyab (1926 - 1964)

1.Fragrance

You perfumed my dreams with the scent,
That wafts from your black, splendid hair.
The air around, tiptoeing spring
From distant bowers to the tryst.
This is the love perfume you blew
To look out for its future course,
A fountain of ethereal steps,
That dreams of green shade and a rest.
The drunk lover counts on your lips
How many stars the night has left.
You lighted love lantern after
It dimmed; but for you it would die.
The wind blew on it so madly,
With loosened hair and bloodied hands.
The oil of this scent, and the fire,
Come from a kiss, not even born.
It floats like fancy on perfume,
And in the thirsty heart would sink.
I am about to call "You are
The one I fancied in my past."
The one of her my soul may dream,

Upon the banks of foamy time.
It asks the waves, and then it points
To every sail, to guide it near.
I am about to call, but for
Some passing thoughts within my soul.
The visions of my beauties bounced,
Calling, "Witness, O memories!
He won from us only the names,
Which poke fun at his roving hopes.
Inscribed by fire throughout his poems
Like dumb images in a shrine."

(10/12/1947)

2.Song of the Rain

Your eyes are two palm-groves
At the hour of dawn;
Two balconies, from which the moon
Is moving far away.
And when they smile the vine becomes so green;
And dance the lights, like in a brook, the moons
When gently touched by oars,
At that hour of dawn.
Then they are drowned in fogs
Of translucent distress,
Just like the sea, when stroked over, by evening hands
It has the winter warmth,
The quiver of Autumn,
And death, and birth, and darkness and the light.
And then awakes, to fill my soul,
A shaking urge to weep,
A rapture wild, that would embrace the sky,
Like when a child is fearful of the moon.
As if the rainbows are quaffing of the clouds
And drop by drop they melt into the rain.
The children giggle in the vine-bowers.
The silence of the sparrows on the trees
Is tickled by

The song of rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
The evening yawned, the clouds are still
Pouring down their heavy tears.
Sounds like a child was babbling
Before he fell asleep,
That when a year ago
He woke up and he was to find
His mother was not there.
But when he asked and asked,
They said, "she will come back
The day after tomorrow ..."
She must be coming back,
Though friends whispered that she is there,
Beside the hill, within a grave,
And fast asleep,
She quaffs the earth and drinks the rain;
As if a fisherman so sad is pulling out his nets ,
Cursing the waters and the fate,
And strewing song where down the moon has set.
Rain ...
Rain ...
But do you know what grief is caused by rain?
And how rain-water drains whimper when it pours,
And how the lonesome feels that he is lost
Without an end, as spilled blood, as the hungry?

Like love, like children, like the dead - is rain!
And your eyes would haunt me with the rain,
As, through the breakers of the gulf, the lightning strews
The beaches of Iraq with stars and shells.
As if they are about to shine.
But night would pull on them a shroud of blood.
I call to the gulf: "O gulf,
You grant us pearls, shells and death"
The echo then returns,
As if it were a whimper,
"O Gulf,
You grant us shells and death ..."



And I can almost hear Iraq storing thunders,
And storing lightning on plain and mount;
But when the men break off the seals,
The winds will not leave of Thamood
A trace in the valley.
And I can almost hear
The palm-trees quaffing the rain
And hear the villages moaning and the exiles
Struggling with the oars and sails
Against the tempests of the gulf,
Against the thunder, singing:
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
Yet there is hunger in Iraq,

While the harvest season strews abundance,
To feed the crows and the locust,
While rye and rocks are ground
In mills across the fields
Surrounded by humans.
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
Plenty of tears we shed, the night we left
But we claimed that it was the rain -
For fear of blame -
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
And since we were so little,
The sky was clouded in winter,
And then the rain would fall.
And every year - when grass came out -
We starved.
No year had passed when Iraq did not starve.
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
In every drop of rain
Red, or yellow, nourished by the bloom;
In every tear shed by the hungry and the naked,
In every drop of blood that from the slaves is shed,
There is a smile awaiting newer smiles,

Or a nipple shining on a baby mouth
In future world, the young granter of life.
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
Iraq will be so grass-covered, with rain.



I call up to the gulf, "O gulf...
You grant us pearls, shells, and death
The echo then returns
As if it were a whimper,
"O gulf,
You grant us shells and death."
Of its many gifts, the gulf strews
Over the sands its salty froth and shells
And what remained of some poor drowned bones,
Of those exiles who kept on swallowing death
From the gulf bottom and its waves
While in Iraq a thousand serpents drink nectar
From blooms nourished with dew
By River Euphrates.
An I can hear the echo
Resounding in the gulf
Rain ...
Rain ...
Rain ...
In every drop of rain
Red, or yellow, nourished by the bloom;

In every tear shed by the hungry and the naked
In every drop of blood that from the slaves is shed
There is a smile awaiting newer smiles
Or a nipple shining on a baby's mouth
In future world, the young granter of life.
And then the rain would fall.

□

3. The Waking Nights:

A Night in London

Like a frightened light, sneaking through a door ajar,
Into the darkness of a room,
I heard his wounded whisper, crossing the balcony to me,
To lift the night off London, peeping with its gloom
On the roads that sleep under a blanket of snow.
And yesterday I heard, in Iran, the cock at dawn,
And from the minarets' horizon in Kuwait,
And from the blue sea
A call, spraying my eyelids with slumber
(A ringing of cups, filling with Basrah's
Sparkling water, lifting to my lips)
A call sent out by the prayer-caller...
The lantern went out, its light fluttered
And was by the darkness scattered.
My night, but O, in Beirut enlivens me
To see the face of death, a fountain
Of yearning melting it,
Pouring out of the nightingale's heart,
Pouring among the creeping fragrant twigs
O nights of torment, and disease, I cannot forget.

And alien I was, even in my dreams,
Not in Jaykooor ⁽¹⁾I am, not in Baghdad,
As I walk the deserts of my burning heart,
Looking for water. "Water .. Where is the water?"
The desert shows him mouths on bleak horizons,
Thirsty, quaffing the night to no avail.
Should I spend all my life within a desert,
Within a night of thirst?
Searching for water-springs, for the break of dawn?
Like a blind, intoxicated man shouting,
With both hands fluttering
Between the balusters of a brothel,
Searching for a friend:
"Where is my neighbour? Where my house? Where - Oh -
My princess who used to hand me cups of light?
So my heart discerns the world and meets her?"
As if the morn is rising in Iraq, the vision
Takes me past the seas and folds
A thousand roads that in the night were lost:
A world withdrew, another peeped in:
A world that lives on moons,
Born, grow, then die.
He never wore the new except on days of feast,
He saved, and hoarded, then he spent,
And always laughing, proudly says

That God may give at will ... Such is the world,
A winter, then a summer. But in Jaykooor
There is no monopolizer,
No banks or journals: "Korean night
Is seen a sky of fires."
When there the fires rise
They light the oldmen beards, conversing,
While the women's eyes stare at the food
And watch the children with delight.
Restore me, God of the East, the desert
And the palm-trees, to my sweet days
To my abode, to kiss Ghailan, ⁽²⁾and to my folks.

(London, 3.2.1963)

1. Jaykooor, the village of the poet, south of Basrah.

2. Ghailan, the poet's son.

□

4. In the Hospital

Like a lonesome, helpless man in winter,
And the night had gone past its middle,
He woke up and turned on the light,
And was frightened of his end,
He woke at a beat upon the wall -
It is death! It is approaching!
He listened: is that the falling of the stones
Or is death quaffing cups of air?
Thieves are breaking through to him,
They have bored in the wall.
He kept counting falls of dust,
The beats of axes on his ears.
He almost feels the shining knives,
As they are cutting .. O what torment!
All he can do is mere waiting:
It is death across the wall.



And thus I fell upon my face,
Biting the pillow, and then surrendered,
My back to that cruel lancet,
My bloody back without a guard.
- Against my choice, my doctor wished -
He cut .. he pushed the lengthy probe ..

He pulled it back, O now .. it's back.
And nothing but to wait for long.
O thieves, go on, and pierce the wall
No use! No use! I have no calm!

(London 5.2.1963)

****□

(12) Buland al-Haidari (1926 - 1996)

1.A Woman's Shadow and I

A woman's shadow leads me on.
It pulls me
As a paralyzed fancy all about deserted ways.
I wonder how can I be here myself?!

And I reject myself in fancy
Curtailing things, not apprehending them.
And I reject my colour
If it does not reflect
The darkness of my soul.
And I refuse my face
Unless in its darkness
My grave should take a form.

□

2. Stolen Frontiers

My homeland,
How could you allow a dirty slave-driver
To pull me by the ear,
And go around with me in all the towns,
A slave offered for sale,
At the lowest offered price?!
Is it because, my greater homeland,
In my fancy I found you greater,
So I made vows to myself
That I will not take for my homeland
One that does not grow
Except as bashful maps,
Or black letters that only know
To bark on this platform,
Or croak on that one.



Is it because,
O my poor homeland,
I found you greater, in my fancy,
So I made vows to myself
That I will not take for my homeland
One that is, in fact, divided
Between the knife and the cattle,

That only open their eyes
At the glitter of the knife?



O my homeland,
Memory of rotten sand.
O the features of my son,
Exiled, and wandering with no home.
O frustrated history
That was never to be fulfilled.
O the false leaflet of fig!



Is it because I found you greater in my fancy,
So I made vows to myself,
That I will not take for my homeland
A shroud, a gallows and deserts
That grow nothing but skulls
Of executed men?
I made a vow that I will have
A homeland, not a prison,
And not the hooping of a child,
The bond of shackles,
Or that of a dragon's eyes.



Is it because .. Is it because
O my homeland, is it because
I found you greater in my fancy,
You closed the windows of my house against me,
And stole your frontiers, all of them, from me,

So that I should be like you my homeland
A slave offered for sale at the lowest offered price?
O my misery,
Exiled to the end of time!
O my miserable fate, in time smaller than the palms
Of a little hungry child,
Smaller than a dream
In a lost person's eyes,
Smaller than a thirst
Seeking freshness in a shade.

*****□

3. Assassination

You lie in wait for me
And chase my steps from a shadow sinking in mud
To a shadow fidgeting in the shackles
To a shadow vanishing in a thousand shadows.
And say: you will kill me.
You lie in wait for me
Even on my shivering hands and in my closing eyes
Even in my dumb throat
Looking like a prison gate.
You lie in wait for me
From a time that announced,
Through a severed tongue,
Its full disavowal of me,
To a time that reminds me
Of the fear of a slave, or your boasting
With a face uglier than an idol's.
And you say: you will kill me.
You lie in wait for me
Even in a dream that is about
To run away with me, for my cowardice,
And you say, and swear, that you will kill me.



Your eyes go deep,
To the limits of

Stagnant silence
In the darkness of my eyes.
How cruel are the craters
Of your volcano,
O my homeland!
How cruel is that black blaze
In your eyes, O my homeland!
You, who lie in wait for me
Behind the pleading of your poisoned dagger.
Kill me, kill me, kill me
But tell me
What use is victory in defeated times?
What use is to kill one who is already killed?
O my homeland!

□

(13) Abdul-Wahhab al-Bayyati (1926 - 1999)

1.The Dragon

(i) A dictator, under a mask of nihilism,
Delved deep in murder,
And in crushing humans;
Though he claims he fears
To kill a sparrow.
His picture, smiling,
Is everywhere:
In the café, the brothel, the cabaret, and the market.
The devil was his origin,
But he became its deformed shadow.
He cancelled the calendar;
Cancelled Neroda, Marquez, and Amado.
He cancelled the constitution.
He gave his excellency's name
To all city squares, to all rivers,
To all prisons in the subdued homeland.
He burnt the last soothsayer,
Who refused to fall prostrate,
To the worshipped idol,
Claiming that death is gifts and holy offerings.
His watch-dogs devastated the land;
They stole the people's food.

They raped the muses of poetry,
The wives of men who died under persecution,
Virgins and widows in a war they lost.
They fled like rabbits in a field of clover.
They left behind the bodies of the dead:
Workmen, farmers, writers, artists,
Youngsters in their twenties,
Carpenters, blacksmiths,
Driven to death, by force,
And killed by the bullets,
Of inside and outside invaders,
Hungry, and burnt,
Under an autumn sun.
Disgraced, he veiled his face with clay.
But the dictator went too far in his game,
Until the magic turned against the magician,
And the pillars of falsehood crumbled.
Lo! The picture is under the feet,
Under history's worn out shoes.
Lo! The deposed dictator is murdered in exile,
To let another beast be crowned
In the deceived homeland.
The sandglasses turn again
To count the breaths of the dictator
Lurking everywhere:
In the café, the brothel, the cabaret, the market.

(ii) From the Caribbean to the Wall of China

This dictator is cloned,
And takes the form of a dragon.
When will St. George stab him
With his lance,
And cut his plaits with a knife?!

□

2.The Fire of Poetry

(i) She said, "You will die tomorrow,
Poisoned in exile,
Or slaughtered by a friend's knife
Or a sultan's spy."
The effeminate of Babylon said,
"You are now a captive,
In the name of eunuch poets."
But I was dying, drowning,
In the light coming from the farthest star,
Burning in the blue fire of poetry,
Sharpening my weapons,
And dallying with the guitar, in my death.

(ii) He was dying slowly,
And fighting against the hired dream.
He was the martyr of light.
Fighting in Jaffa, Basrah, Beirut
And at the gates of Kurdistan,
While the enchanted Shatt-al-Arab
Was dying.

(iii) He used to see semimen and effeminates,
Fornicating, behind their desks.

The Arab homeland, retreating under ruins,
Was watching them,
With spell-bound eyes,
Counting the dead, from behind their desks,
Peeping
With the eyes of night thieves.

(iv) The Arab nation was watching
From under the ruins,
The end of false-witnesses.

(v) He was the martyr of the homeland,
Rising from the bottom of excellence,
Drowned in the light.

(Madrid, 7.12.1983)

□

3. Basrah

(i) It was, in the manner of its good people,
Creating heroism and sacrifice,
Distilling history into miracles
And tokens of victory.
With its Arabian face,
In all ages,
- A city of poets and savants -
It resisted raiders.
With the noblest of trees, the date-palm,
With its river,
It was for the martyrs, in their assent,
A heavenly nourishment:
Poetry is the secret of its youth,
The heroism of the people / the builders.

(ii) Your hair-locks in the mirrors of the sea:
A window, a sparrow on the wing,
And two roses.
I am the traveller in time and place,
In the exiles of the alphabet and prosody,
My language flourished with your light,
Becoming candles of love.
It bloomed, and became abodes for the hearts.

Time became a garden,
The sea a mirror of the garden and time.

(iii) My country was wearing a robe of spring.
I halted my camel,
And asked: "How much does my Lady
Ask, for this rosy blue light?
For this robe? For this jasmine?"
She said: "For all the poets' poems,"
Then laughed, and added:
"But, I will never sell!"

(1987)

□

4.The Talisman

The lightning of love burned me, when young
The silence burned me / the talisman,
The black magic at the bottom of our city,
Aladdin's lantern / the moaning of trees
Killed in the cellar,
The shrieks of the imprisoned genie,
The vendors' calls in the markets,
The death of children / the lovers,
The cooing of tower pigeons,
The cries of the mystic
Enthralled by the mention of God,
The early morning prayers,
The tales of grandmothers,
The meat of slaughtered animals hung by butchers,
The eyes of black cats,
The anecdotes of Hallaj,
The wailing of women at the prison gate,
The coffins of the dead,
The black night of royal terror,
The impotence of years,
The yellow grammar books.
Burnt by misery / light / and wandering
In worn out shoes, under the rain,

On holidays,
The lights of Baghdad minarets,
Bab-ul-Shaikh / the offerings of the poor.
The lightning of love burned me when I was young,
And when she was, too,
So, what are my lady's orders, now?!

(1988)

□

(14) Husain Mardan (1927 - 1972)

Man of the Fog

Woe to a people that does not revolt
When its land is defiled by colonists.
Woe to a people, though insulted, still
Fears the rulers' whips, and orders obey.
Should we dream of the sky and its colour,
While our noses dig a grave in the mud!
Should we be branded submissive and all
Around us peoples do rise and revolt!
Should we be awaiting destiny, while
We all know that glory is a red dream!
Wherever I turn I see beginnings
Of a fierce revolt, bless it when it roars!
In every eye there is a restless wish
For fighting; a dagger in every hand.
In every bare chest, sun-burnt and restless,
There is a yearning for a razing fight.
On every withered lip, there is a song,
So redly seeping, and dripping with blood.
But we bemoan the lack of leadership,
Proud and disdainful the force of iron.
Leadership in Iraq is but a tale,

Yellow, and nourished by the yellow gold.
We complain of dearth, but the outsider
Has in our land sweet Paradisiac streams.

(1951)

(15) Mustafa Jamaluddeen (1927 - 1996)

1.A Night on the Euphrates

O night! Where are my friends and companions?
The cups are empty. Where is the cup-bearer gone?
Beloved, come back, here is a partner
Drunk on the wine of glamorous light.
The moon washed night is cups of bright silver
Filled up with distilled nectar of the light.
The brilliant stars are companions of youth
Of tipsy heads and gently dropping necks.
They drank their cups, and when the brain was touched
They spilled the lees upon the world.
The moon⁽¹⁾ - if but you knew - is one in love.
His powers were snapped up by dreaming eyes.
His tears flowed down. They said: these are but rays.
He withered down. They said: he is waning.
The river went insane; no charm could help,
And overflowed, and so the charmer failed.
It flowed, and when the branches tried to kiss it,
It sent its tears to inundate its eyes.
A lover may be moved by ecstasy
To meet his love, and cannot check his tears.



O night! The river flowed with fresh water
But see my eyes have filled with salt warm tears.
The signs of wealth have overwhelmed its waves,
But destitution signs engulfed my heart.
Proud is the river that its water shall
Revive the waste and all the fruitless land.
When Syrian lands rejoice to see it full,
Every Iraqi face will shine with bliss.
It will revive the souls that were so grieved,
And straighten heads that were so long in gloom.
It will enlighten dark houses when night
Of discontent shall fall, and markets wane.
But as for me, of what shall I be proud
When my hand orders me to give and spend?
Shall I be bountiful in poems and hope
That dead morals with poems will be revived?
Are not the rhymes commodity unsold,
In honest markets has no chance to sell!

(1) The moon is masculine in Arabic.

□

2.A Gulf Damsel

Night is pouring in your eyes,
The morn is ablaze in your cheeks.
The sea, its waves are in a doze;
You touch your hair and it will rise
The treasures which the gulf has stored
Are scattered on your hand to choose.
The flaming rubies for your lips,
The shining pearls are for your smiles.
The silver, for your mature chest
For its two domes the shining gold.
Before the sparkling brook - that is
Your eyes - I am a dusty waste.
My desert calls upon you as
My roots have dried, my jars are void.
Then pour, so that my plant shall grow
On its soil. My toil shall bloom.
The cup of clouds, will it stay void
While on your lips the grapes are ripe?!

(18.8.1986)

□

3. Awake (*)

Tell me, you who are away in "Rafha"(1)
How can the waking, in its nights, ever doze!
How can the sand-storms rock a cradle
That the homeland was weary with its weeping?!
The two sweet rivers were tired with it,
So it was grasped by these sound mounds.
For it the desert-heat spread out its brands,
The sedges were generous with their thorns.
The channel's breasts fed it their milk,
The sunstrokes lulled it on to sleep.
Then was covered from summer heat
By scorching wind - so tenderly!



O desert child, you are a plant
That could attract a fragrant rose.
By hatred you were born a wolf,
So be a wolf hiding a man inside.
The beasts do not approach your home for fear,
But lambs will seek your shade for peace.
You ... who are you? you are a spring
Of marshy lands? undone by the flood.
A baby palm, had it not been for spite,
Its cluster would have been the orchard pride.

Had it not been for all those "wolves"
A nightingale you would have been to please the ears.
Your babbling in the morning is a feast;
The crying in the evening is a fair.
The jingling of the children is the best
That can be heard, the fairest of all speech.
It is too heavy on my heart to see
Such tender soul received by rocks so coarse,
Received on laps, at "Rafha" sands by storms.
The mid morn, in its dim dust, is so dark.
The night, with its poisonous winds, is bright

(22.2.1992)

(*) Awake, waking, are two adjectives which describe the "wolf" and are used here in their rhetorical Arabic sense. It is also the name of the poet's grandson.

(1) Rafha, is the desert camp on the Saudi Arabian frontier where the Iraqi deportees were kept in the wake of the Gulf War of 1991.

□

(16) Shafeeq al-Kamali (1929 - 1984)

1. Farewell

So it was farewell; do you remember,
The tales of farewell, as I remember?
The evening we walked, and on our whisper,
Along with the night, we were almost drunk.
You moved about, like a tender lily,
Of which was boasting your grass green garment.
Your hair, your eye-lashes, the swelling two,
The marble landing of the butterflies,
Were worlds, unravished by wondering eyes,
Nor attained in any hovering dream.
Alone, we both unveiled the hidden calm,
And folded time away, unknowingly.
Wishing the world were one wide oasis,
And all the ages lying on its sands.
Wishing that time were dead, so no moment
May be lost, nor any sigh may expire.
Then sails would fold, and yearning would perish,
The seas would carry far the parting barque.

We wander, but our road comes to no end,
Nor, my sweetheart, do we shorten the way.
We perfume with our murmurs and whispers,
The whole domain, so it becomes amber.
We wander, heedless of all passers by,
Who may come near, or any jealous eye.

2. A Stop of Farewell

In each corner here, the heart has a reminder,
Chanting for it are chords from the depth of the soul;
Reminders that sprinkle the perfumed talk around,
They bring us nearer home, when home is far away.
The frantic heart turned all around, as if it had
A fire of passion, followed by another fire,
Looking with passionate eyes, begging your kindness,
How often he had needs for all the maidens' hearts!
The passion fingers have passed over my liver,
And hovered like a bereaved breeze, and sang some poems.
As if my throbbing heart, so squeezed by hot passion,
Is a world of poems I recite, and a guitar.
These corners, if you but ask them, they will speak up
And tell you tales of those who long ago had gone;
And tell you of a dream, on which we used to live,
Like butterflies; the bunch of maidens were flowers.
Many a time we sat in the garden, allured
By charming talk, as the talk of love is scented.
Many a doze I enjoyed on the lawn, which when
Remembered, the heart bemoans then it collapses.
Wherever I turn, I find the flocks of gazelles
Like pigeons on the wing and birds of a feather.

(17) Lamee'a Abbas Imara (1929 -)

1.Lemon Blossom Necklace

We have missed the blossoms, their glamour and plenty,
We have missed the seasons of lemon-blossom.
Many a time we picked the scattered blooms,
Shaken off the trees, to string them like fragrant pearls.
Whenever a lemon-tree is blossoming afar,
I feel it had opened up my wounds.
Breezes, I wish they sailed from Baqouba orchards,
On the wings of the dawn.
We search a similitude of beauty,
Hoping the eye would enjoy what is available and near.
This one looks like our northern climes
With all its springs of sparkling water.
This looks like Astrate's castle
In Arbil, the tourists' attraction.
That one looks like the way to Kirkuk,
With its waves inviting the sailor.
That one is a bit of Abu-Nuwas banks,
In Baghdad, full of lights, twinkling in the cups.
But they do not replace my mother's face,
Though aged, all these lovely faces.
Be addicted to staying abroad,

And calm down, my friend, restrain your longing
Adapt yourself to grief,
Like a Hindu who calmly sleeps on pricks.
Shaherazade stopped talking,
A long time ago,
And we have refrained from permitted talk.

□

2. As if I Were in Baghdad

As if I were in Baghdad,
That came to hug me, as in days of yore.
Has Baghdad come to my distant shore?!

I feel a rose of love
In every hand that shakes my hand,
Swarming the heart with lovely thoughts.
I sense the spices, and the odour
Of the simmering Amber rice,
As hungry from my school I come,
Along the winding Baghdad ways,
Dragging my feet at noon.

My loved ones you are;
My homeland that is now departed,
And companions of my march;
United all by love,
The love of dear Iraq,
United by a pang,
And by a huge affliction.

A pang, we choke, O yes!
Though here the food is tasty.

The child, the old, and everyone
Is hungry now in dear Baghdad!
The pauper woman, who is left
With nothing more to sell!
Our blood is spilt,
But is the Arab honour saved?

We choke, because the hungry ones
Are known to us in person!
The ones who died for lack of cure
Are known to us in person!
The ones whose homes were pillaged;
The slaughtered ones in their own shops;
The ones who lost their mind;
The others, for no reason, killed;
The others who went missing;
The ones who were disabled...
We know them all in person!

Divided are all our souls:
One half is here: the other there,
In two locations, set apart.
Our bodies, only, are apart
Though in the homeland is the heart.

(U.S.A. 13.7.1994)

3. Blocked are my Ways

Still enamoured, you know how enamoured I am,
To you attracted by my hair and my lashes.
Without you, living is no living, and too much
Of living is tiring, and not worth the effort.
Autumn has passed, after the summer, and the wind
Wrapped itself from the cold, with the November clouds.
There are no questions, or echoes of a night talk
So is there, bless you, a reason for your silence?!
You got me used to luxurious night talk, O king
From the Arabian Nights, with no likeness in books.
O God! Could the wires preserve what they did carry
Of rarities of poems and spectacular words!
Rarities that could not have passed through any lip,
Effortless they come, as a glow from falling stars.
I see you have lonesome shadows, O fair palm-leaves!
While with me you glittered in the dates season!
With whom do you replace me, you who cut me up,
To match me with this and that, as you torture me?
I think the tell-tales have been plotting against me,
As they bring to you my shirt, so smeared with false blood.

(1977)

(18) Ali al-Hilli (1930 -)

1. O Guardian of Fire!

Let the rabble spread great terror and sedition,
And implore the horror to send more scorching flames.
Let it in eternal folds remain a grave-yard,
Holding all the dead, who were together martyred.
Entice the fire across the wall, eager to burn
Remnant of corpses, and keep revenge dejected.
Expose the corpse that lay so cold and motionless
As from it the fragrance of freedom is seeping.
And ask support from blind force, and say, "There is blood
Within the veins, all starving and discharging moans."
And bless the fevered giant, that is so enthralled,
Since death became enraptured by the fiery storm.

(1952)

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2. Gallows Food

Roar! You people's blood, for you are the chant;
In the nation's ears you reverberate.
You are a raging fire! From us you have,
From our children, from theirs, the needed fuel.
Say not he died; the martyr never dies;
Revenge is ours, and the new sacrifice.
The fertile tomorrow, the offerings,
Wherever whoops the earth, or chokes the ice.
Ours the thought, the dreams, the soaring soul,
The arts, and all the glorious heritage.
Ours the sky-line, across it of our blood
A thousand dawns, in every mouth a chant.
Processions roar on every bloodied road,
And echo in the hearing of the world.
Life exploded him as the earth rejoiced
Across his world, the heavens had a feast.
Say not he died! Woe to death and more woe,
For decayed blood is on our sands, and heights.
The morning will not die, we are its rays
Night shall perish, and iron shall expire.

(1960)

(19) Akram al-Witri (1930 -)

1.I Passed on the Bridge

I passed on the bridge,
The cradle of love,
There, where we met one evening.
I walk on it, as if I found
On the lap of spring remains of a winter.
It dozed, fatigued by the passing of years
On it, and bored with staying so long.
An old thing, where decay has yawned
And where the hosts of ruin crept.



I passed on the bridge,
Where we once met,
Searching for my past, the lost,
Hoping some fragrance of you had stayed
On it: a legend of a spreading love.
I walked, was thirsty for mirage,
Was all desire for fooling hope.
I only found a void, where I
Would call, but no one heard.
When I could laugh, there was the echo
Humming in the dormant wood,



When I went back, with nibble steps,
Avoiding the glimmer of that horizon,
Our baby hope came near, then turned
Away, to dry a tearful eye.

(1947)

****□

2. Sad Baghdad

The tired clock is always peeping through the smoke,
Counting tragedies and farces by the minute and the second.
What has come over the earth to turn its dwellers into slaves?
The visions darkened. On the earth the eyes can nothing new behold.
And pageants swarmed, with blackened foreheads, over all the roads around,
To seek salvation in the farce-house, in the temples, in cafés.
These are kneeling-they are pious-and repentant of their sins.
Some are wandering with passion; these with prostitutes in bed.
Others are astray and shaken by the bitter failures deep,
In the memories they are wasting what is left of their short lives.
Here, the moaning songs are getting older, older with the years.
There, the passers-by are women; seem to carry mysteries.
And the hungry souls are women; eyes that drink from eyes their fill.
Excited for warmth of passion; pining for a tender hold.
Here a poet, holding heavens, yet to earth is tied for food;
Folding years in agony, yet neither live can he nor die;
A slave is he, to slaves of dust, wherein they all their foreheads smeared,
Then looked up fearing punishment as if they have murdered a god.
- Among tumultuous crowds I move; like one without a heart I walk
By dreams, from road to road, and by illusions I am dragged.

(1950)

3.Ungrateful Cord

Bored with silence, my cord stretched out,
Weaving itself into ailing tunes.
Some of its meanings could touch the hearts,
Yet its depth remained unknown.
A darkness, folds missed by the eyes
A light, where sight remains purblind.
Whispers, joined to whispers, flowing
To perdition, consumed, dismayed.
O my loss, O death of love within my soul,
O the fount of servile songs!
Misled by myths about you, till
You turned to something I won't tell.
You came to me, and left so pleased,
But I was left to lonely nights.
Despite me dies my soul, but live
Some dreams disfigured, that were fair.
My cord, why did you sing of passing froth
And cheapen your imprisoned soul?

(1950)

(20) Muhammad Jameel Shalash (1930 -)

The Helmet and the Seagull

Like the flutter of a white dream,
Among the remains of village and water,
It was going to and fro,
Preoccupied,
Holding in its beak a few remains,
From a kindergarten,
That was destroyed by enemy rancour.



Like a boat of death,
On a night of black nightmares,
I was startled,
And lacerated, By a soldier's helmet,
Floating on the water,
Dozed by the music of silence,
And the flutter of war - martyrs' hearts.



Perhaps the helmet was my brother's,
Or my friend's
Or a dead enemy soldier's.
To whoever it belonged...
It was a testimony that
War is ruin

Peace: a bliss.



And so, the seagull was,
Between a bullet and the next,
Swooping, like a dream, so white,
Down to the floating helmet,
Preoccupied with some remains.
He was, like every worthy man,
Building up a nest!
For future generations,
The happy ones to come.



The fathers will depart,
The children will arrive,
But in the water's memory
The helmet will remain.

(5/4/1984)



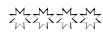
(21) Yousuf al-Sayigh (1933 -)

1. Westwards ... Till Mount Olive

Twenty pigs in chains
Were grazing in the ruins of the northern hill,
They heavily passed
 And unhurriedly
They destroyed my house
And killed my folk.
Twenty mythical pigs
Came to the hill before dawn
And left by the end of the night.
Nothing in the house they left but silence
 And a moon of death ...
It is a moon of blood,
Pieces of bread were stuck to it:
Blood and sand.
A crow mounting the shoulders of a cat.
 I looked at my body with wolfish eyes
 And felt the howling coming sticky
 And slobber wet.
I saw me sniffing at the corpses,
Searching for my wife among the dead ...
 But the ominous crow shrieked

The scene was split in two ...
Here I am in this shelter, where with me live
A thousand Palestinians
The shelter is a scene of hunger
And it is a scene of fear ...
When the shelling started,
Crept by me the moaning voices of the clay,
Followed by the childbirth pangs.
Another bomb exploded,
The ceiling fell ...

And we were killed ...



And then we heard a fetus laughing in the ruins.



A dead moon
And an orphan fetus ...
We saw on that suspicious moon
A bee of blood, and a hair of a wolf.
To-night the dead moon will flow down,
A thread
Of Arab blood,
Tangled in the branches.
Tonight the olive trees will grow in Tall al-Zatar.
So the orchard will be complete ...
Before the dawn will come
The black pigs once again,
And on their backs ten one-eyed priests.
The olive has ripened now and become sad ...
And this good heart has become sad.

And in no time,
The massacre will start
So who would buy a ticket?
I have bought two tickets for tonight
As we were two
Judas and myself
In the middle of the scene!



A naked body,
With a severed head
Its fingers clinging to remains of black hair
A golden wedding ring was twinkling there...
And on the severed neck
There were remains of hasty kisses,
About to dry!
I shouted: It's my wife, you people of the hill
But Judas' answer was
- No, No ...
This is the Arab body,
And in the waste it will remain ten nights
Until the Arab homeland there disintegrates.



Judas
Judas
You eternal, handsome traitor
Terror was appointed a false witness
And suspicions were trained
In poetry, pulse, and kisses
So why do you want to tempt me?!



I pray:
Our father that art in the conscience
Thou art sanctified!
Be thou with us in the final choice
And if it were inevitable
Let us enter the trial.



Judas took me.
He held me by the point of grief.
The world became narrow round me
And it became a chamber
Of death and persecution.
He shackled me and said:
Look deep ...
I looked and saw a woman
Crying on the cross,
A young one screaming - from Dakwana camp:

Bread is on the wounds / Water is in the eyes.
When we the weapons squeezed / They let fall but two drops.
Before the morning came / I had been killed twice.
Do not kill me a third time,
Don't kill me ... I am tired!



Tired is my sweetheart ...
And tired is the olive, upon the myrtle branch.
And tired from the loving
Also, the Son of Man.
Judas is also tired ...

He held me by the point of horror
And I became all naked ...

The room became narrow for me.
From the window to the door
It was but seven steps
Seven steps ...
 Seven orchards,
 The sorrows of the poor are seven,
 Seven children shout in play:
The toy we slaughtered ... Flowed the blood.
O you cousins!
At first the butcher came ...
Then came ... the treacherous boy
And after that ...
 The pit opened ...
 The game began ... Began the game
 Began the ...
 Silence!
 Hush!
 You speak ... you die!
 Hush ... Hush!
 Forbidden is to laugh, my boy
 Forbidden is to speak or cry ...
 The gendarme is
 Portrayed above the door.

****□

2.Words that Did not Smile

For Jawad Saleem

His fountains penetrate the rocks
To wet the mouth of the orange;
To wet the rose veins in our groves,
And fill the baskets with lilies.
We used to approach his window,
The question writhing in the eyes,
He would lay his crops before us,
Then plant a sunny branch in shades.
When his founts dried up on the rocks,
A thing died away in men's veins.

(22) Sa'di Yousuf (1934 -)

1.Details:

The mini room is full of nails.
The tenants left,
And left me nothing but the nails.
They pushed their nails into the wood,
They pierced with them the heart of iron,
They split the concrete with them
As if it were a wall of wood.
They left no trace except these nails.
Where did they bring them from?
What did they do with them?
For near my head are nails
And in the basin where I wash my face,
Are nails.
Even the air is nails ...
Don't be surprised if I should say to you
That I once put my hand in my pocket
To try and find a coin
But all I found was nails.
I comb my hair
And nails fall off my hair.
Even the girl I once had loved
Was distanced by the nails.



I am a man like you,
Feel comfort in a room,
With a girl and a song.
So why should nails become my share?

(Paris, 22.11.1990)

*****□

2.Evening in Late November

Tonight
I thought perhaps I did not say it well,
For what is it that I mumbled
At the bus-stop?
What is the meaning of the thing whose meaning
I could never find
When from the bus-window
I turned a little round?
What is the meaning of my hand
Failing to make a sign.
In fact .. I did not say it well,
But you tonight - the distance,
To distance capital returns,
To where the lights, after mid day,
Are turned off, and the windows
Never opened to the street.
How close to me is all this!
As I, in my room, on the seventh floor
Have prepared my bread,
My wine, and what remained
Of yesterday's cheese.
My window, as you know, does not admit the light.
My lamp is my morning.

One more night and I am not warm.
The bus which I saw off towards the airport
Has chosen to take your eyes away from me,
To take away that turn - that moment
The ear-ring which I teased at dawn,
The thread that I hold on to see my day so free ...
You know what you have left to me:
The coldness in my limbs,
The memory of a bar with cloudy sounds,
The laughter at midnight,
What shall I do tonight?
Shall I go to that stop
To see the bus depart
Quietly towards the airport?

(Paris, 26.11.1990)

*****□

3.Abduction

That was not a homeland,
Everything in it could make us its own image,
We, the children of the impossible soil.
That was not a homeland,
Everything in it could submerge the fountain leaves.
How did it come once again
To tear our blood like lightning?
We have forgotten it,
And said we shall not see its rushes
Not even in a dream.
We have forgotten it,
Like soldiers would forget the first kisses,
Like beds that would forget the sand,
Like waves that would forget
The seaweed of the bottom.
We have forgotten it
And said we will not see it once again.
So who pushed it across
A slightly open window?
And who pushed it in under the door?
Or who brought it when we were not aware,
In order to abduct us
With that, her bloody hand
To throw us at the summit
A meat for the eagles?

(Paris, 5.5.1991)

(23) Salah Niazi (1935 -)

1.The Circle

The circle is at one time,
Like a waking nozzle,
Waiting for the zero hour.
And at another time agape
Like the eyes of the diseased
With a clouded memory.
The little ones discover circles in the water.
We see them racing on the road behind their wheels.
O how the distant round intoxicates!
It is a danger if it takes another turn.

Is it a wave, or just a road?
This mother cries after the child:
"Don't you go far!"
Her hands are wailing, like the drowned.

The peasant women think that time
Turns, like the hands turn on a clock,
But tied to one single pivot.
It goes, but does not leave.
It nears, without approach.

Verse-mongers of yesterday
Measured the time
With what gray hair has done to them.
They measured pleasure with the smile
Of the calif's tooth.
And the bliss they also measured
With their copulation organ.
The time, they thought, grows old and weak
And, like the faces, turns hollow,
Then drops, one tooth after another.
The one who was imprisoned thought
That time is turning wheels:
One day is hard, another fair.
But take a look in to that hideout
To see the humans all diseased,
Out of contagious circles.
Now take a look in to that hideout
To see them writhing in the mud
Their skin covered with rust.
Then take a look in to that hideout
To see the ones who at one time
Were citadels demanding speech.
The lethal weapons they controlled
The cameras, newspaper leaders.
And every field was in their hands
With livestock in all the lands.
And every maiden was their quest.
But when the cannon volleys roared

To split the palace with the lackies
They had no chance to escape.
They hoped to find one dark metre
Or any place in this wide world,
But they kept going all around
Slipping on what was behind
Left of their excessive blood.

(London, 1.5.1983)

2.Canned Neighing

Chained neighing is fervent in the reins,
Thrusting stabs into the flesh,
The flesh is stuck to stabs. The eye
Is scraped off. While the news-caster declared
That horses flared like fire-flames
In upright living trees. The neighing flared
Like an airplane squeezing its horror,
In shelters. Here is a shoulder
Pulled out like an old sleeve.
And on the sand are heads, turned on their skulls,
Staring at the killers, their veins
Like crushed tomatoes, sticking to the slipper.
The neighing poured on
Enemy ranks, said the announcer.
He described all kinds of cutting
And severing human bodies
On every front. Says the announcer
That the calif
Is much softer than a silk worm.
He fluttered like silk and patted,
Patted on should ... patted on heads
Full of liquids. Rose the neighing
That was with victory smeared.

The cheers went up, the flute, the ude,
The drum were all called up.
The drum, O yes, the drum; the voice
Of the announcer shrieks, as he
Runs after the calif. Only
The horse, that knew the devastating lie,
Remained, there, on the screen, watching
The battle, and selling
The canned neighing
To the laughable nation.

(London, 6/1983)

3.The Muslim

I wrote my verses on my knife
And came elated, like a breeze.
This is my only God, so come
Worship a fierce, though lenient, Lord.
And like the sun, upon a "Rock"
I stood and called, "O seas and lands!
Come all to prosperity, and,
Come all to have your soul reformed."
The earth was roused, with all its brooks
The trees all fluttered, like the wings.
My face, unmasked, can you discern
A face against which winds have fought?!
In my desert I had no friends,
Except the wolves and barking dogs.
I am enthralled by rounded thighs
And by the eyes, healthy or sick.
I wander, heedless, round sand mounds
Storming through terrors, fully armed.

(24) Fawzi Kareem (1945 -)

1. Fools' Paradise

In vain does man
Go against the current of hard times
Towards the stagnant cistern
Of exile away from home.

In vain! The current does not care
About the bones of those who drowned.
The sun will then resume
Its turning all around
The ruins of the house.

In vain! The prisoner of war
Can never overcome the dreams.
Nor can the one who has returned
Among the bodies of the dead
Defeat the carcasses of time.

The urge to travel is, no doubt,
The fools' imagined paradise.
The home: the straits that join two pits;
The sea-farer who sails to seek
Another shore, may lose them both.

(London, 6/1985)

2. I Stretch out my Hand

To the remnants of stones,
To the summer uprooted,
To a woman who never was,
To a book I inherited,
To another I bequeathed to the fires,
To a drinking-companion,
Gazing into the cup
Looking for a homeland
In the poppies.
To the ruins of my father's house,
Surveilled by the Bedouins,
Through the nozzles of their guns.
To the final sigh in it,
To the very last brick,
Under the shadow and the scent
Of the eucalyptus tree
I stretch my hand
Across my window, to embrace.
But London has been rainy
For a week,
Rainy for ever.

London, 4/1986

□

(25) Ali Ja'far al-Allaq (1945 -)

How Did Night Surprise Us?

Did Cordoba cry
In the forenoon?
The wind was green
So was the soul.
The horses in the villages
Were scenting the clouds, excited,
So in the grassy stones
Up shoots the dew.

Cordoba did not sleep,
How did sleep surprise us?
Our days are muddy stars
Where are our gazelles?
Where is the apple of the soul?
Where are the songs?
The bloody scent of clouds?
How did the night surprise us?
Our bodies are set
Against our bodies.

How did our conscience
Turn into a trap?

Which of us did go astray
From their blood:
Cordoba or us?.

(1992)

□

(26) Ma'ad al-Juboori (1947 -)

A Leaf of Time

Wandering
Among the Assyrian murals,
To the farthest fountains,
To the remotest time.

Here,
Thousands of distances ago
I broke the first jar
Before a first woman
So the wild honey flowed
From Kalih
 Down to Nineveh.
And the earth shook
Under a load
 Of humans and genies.
I was probably in a palace
Surrounded with lilies
 By Ashur Banipal
The cup was in my hand
The antelopes frolicking on the plain
Covered with daisies.

The day the Earth turned around me
- Or is it me that turned around the Earth,
I know not -
I did not wake from my ecstasy
Until thousands of steeds
Had passed me by
 With fawns and gardens..
I saw the cup moving
From my hand towards
The last dark valley,
And the sun
Sprinkling saffron
On the last of my towers.



Thousands of jars later,
Among which I was breaking.
I now return
From my first ecstasy
 To sneak into the plain
Where peasant women
Were before me winking:
"Who is this wanderer,
His face amber pale
 His eyes lik smoke?!"
Then they leave
 To a remote plain
And I run after them, calling:
- O daughters of the plain,

Does any of you know a face,
Among thousands of faces
That went out of my sight
But wasn't absent from the heart except for a few seconds?



The plain was deserted.
But I had broken the first jar
So, should I wash off my hands?
I shall go on
Wandering among the murals of my days,
To the farthest fountains
To the remotest casks ...



□

(27) Amjad Muhammad Said (1947 -)

Forty Days and Mowsil is the Horizon

Between two arches of marble and tears,
I sneak my shadow into the myrtle
 And the ancient alleys;
Unleash a sun of wintry robe,
Wrapped by houses and the fatigued.
I call the way to the sun 'my love,'
And grant the years my homecoming.
I'll cross the city-bridge,
To and fro.
I'll roam the alleys in the dawn,
Branch by branch,
 And wound by wound.
I'll go around the clean thresholds:
One corner after another,
And one heart after another ...
On one side of the sky
 Of northerly wind,
Near fears and hopes,
That boy would seek the shade of a star
As shelter on the roofs.
He grabbed a moon that on his hand
Alighted, as in grief.

He turned his dream into a boat
To cross the night and hunger.
Forty days have passed.
You do not own a sun,
But they are forty orbits
Replete with Mowsil's glow.
Not only one name has the Tigris,
But they are forty veins
Connected to the lungs.
And they are forty prophets
Following in their steps,
And to the fog of their minarets
The heart opened a window
And the morning glowed-
O boat floating over the Tigris - Gently!



Now we stop beside the castle*
By the stony wall, a bit.
Then we drink the passion
Out of the Sulphur Fount.*
We pass over the first bridge,
By the café that was sunk*
In the bottom of the river,
By the popular market,*
Sunk and gone.
Woe is me!
You do not own a thing
But you own all of Mowsil

Pavements, gardens, and the clouds
And the burning fires.



Between two arches
Of trees and clouds
The evening returns home
An archway closed the door
Behind your wooden windows.
The tales embrace the children's fancies
Near the warming hearth.
You doze a bit,
You eat walnuts and figs
And then you fall asleep.

*** The castle, ruins from Atabiki times (13th Century) sulphur Fount, near the castle, at the bend of the Tigris. north of Mowsil. The sunk café (Thowb café) a very old café on the western bank of the Tigris, near the Old Bridge, removed when the bank was enlarged. All these are nostalgic sites.**



(28) Jawad al-Hattab (1950 -)

An Attempt to Explain Bewilderment

Drowsiness..

Drowsiness.

* Kick, you pillow, at my sleep.

For drowsiness

Undresses all our dreams.

And drowsiness, O drowsiness

Is ten minutes away

From my awakening.

* At the sobbing of the clusters

Drowsiness was laying

On the heads of nights

Wreaths of sleep.

* Drowsiness - dust.

* Drowsiness - fog.

* Drowsiness - me.

And the wreaths are my death.

* On the fingers of my house

Like a ring, I hang the waking,

And am wary not to turn,

(But I turn and I am

Startled by my house
The door-latch made up
For Mr. Sleep
(...) And then they slept together
Near my day.)
- Eh, the old day, on its head
The horns have grown
Tomorrow I shall search
The arm-pits of the windows
- No shame -
Perhaps my suit has fled,
Towards the drowsiness.

... Drowsiness, drowsiness
Is five minutes away
From my waking

* My waking - my crisis
Insomnia, are all the tunes
The saxophone can play.
When will grief
Send me a tear

In order to refine me?

(29) **Jawad Jameel (1954 -)**

All windows are open for your eyes

Alone you know the grass of the road
And know the secret of the distance.
As you scooped out of the river
All the tales, and left it with
Its visions turning into myths.
You said: mirrors are deserts of illusion
So the mirrors put an end to their lives
In his hands.
You said: the shores are but a swing of mirage,
The song of palm-trees: an elegy,
The sparrows: sculptured ashes.
And said: the shrouded Euphrates
Is crucified by my thirst
The stars are holes filled with mourning



Have mercy on me ...
The clay is now without a meaning,
The sea is no more blue,
Because you changed their essence,
And revolted in a lacerated time.

****□

(30) Hadi Yaseen

InVain

Speech is all in vain.
But we are deep in that folly.
In rhyme we set it and in caravans of letters,
In meanings we furnish it to be left at large.
How often had the predecessors
Raised the houses of that speech?!
But time has turned around to stab those houses deep.
Are we to plan their laceration?
So that it will bring us down?
Are we all in vain?

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