

Cool
And
Collected
Poems

MOSHE BENARROCH

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THE IMMIGRANT'S LAMENT

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*

In Morocco I was the center
of all the parties
a social phenomenon
always surrounded by friends
until I came to Israel
and ended up in a corner
the corner of all the parties
I stopped going
always on the outside
the outsiderwhen
I came
I became a poet.

*

I can see you
Moshe
I can see you my friend Moshe
a twelve and a half year old boy
sensitive and lazy
I love you Moshe
I see you after the Bar Mitzvah
your mother announcing that
tonight we are leaving
I see you with the suitcases
always looking for something secure
suddenly nothing is secure
I see you in Ceuta
waiting for your father to sell the buildings
for peanuts

the Arab took out a knife
before he finally paid in Spain
I see you on the ship
on the way to Algeciras
I see you dreaming
dreaming of the land of Israel
dreaming a dream
a wonderful dream
with a temple
a dream full of light
I see you full of joy
traveling through Spain
in Valencia, in Barcelona
see you full of happiness and full of hope
that the land of Israel will heal
your brother Ari who is dying
see you in a hired taxi
you are wonderful Moshe
trying to be loved by everybody
tired and lazy
but always nice
I see you arriving at Marseille
entering the bus there
your father is angry
at the manager of the transit hotel
the sewer is plugged
shit is flowing everywhere
everything is wonderful
but there is shit everywhere
you cannot know what is awaiting you
I see you Moshe
landing in the land of Israel
half-drunk in the airport

you don't understand what is happening
but you don't kiss the land
or more precisely the asphalt
I see you
a week in the boarding school
of Aliyat Hanoar
a week you cried without stopping
I see the nice tutor
coming from the boy scouts
saying you, you are too big to cry
and you cry even more
that it's going to pass
and you cry even more
I see you Moshe
and my heart goes out to you
I love you Moshe
and suffer with you there
in Zichron-Yaacov
when will you forget Moshe
when will forgive
a week later your mother came to save you
took you to the secondary school
in Pardes-Hanna
they didn't want you in 9th grade
in spite of skipping a class
because of your age
and your mother
"why should he lose a year?"
Insisting and insisting
till you finished the final exams
at sixteen and a half
and then waited a year
studying physics and mathematics

at the Hebrew University
she pushed you to this too
always pushing
you wanted to walk slowly
It took you so long to learn to go slow
my heart goes out to you Moshe
Moshe the immigrant
Moshe looking for redemption
Moshe disappointed
Moshe crying
Moshe becoming religious
Moshe a half-year atheist
Moshe who doesn't get along with girls
Moshe believing in reincarnation
Moshe studying mathematics
Moshe studying literature
Moshe wanting to be a poet
Moshe running after literary editors
Moshe editing a literary review
Moshe writing a novel in 3 weeks
Moshe writing thousands of poems
Moshe writing ten novels
nobody publishes
Moshe always trying to be loved
by people
Moshe after people who don't understand
his sensitivity
Moshe who wants to be loved for his poems
Moshe my heart goes out to you truly
Moshe I love you
in all your searching
in all your impossible searching
Moshe who knows everything will have

an explanation one day.
Two things always
writing and listening to music
music
especially after you visited your cousin
in Madrid
arrived religious and returned a heretic
there you bought
your first Van Morrison record
since then you bought them all
and thousands more
always music and writing
to save yourself
from going insane
in this crazy world
my heart goes out to you
Moshe the poet
Moshe the true poet
I love you at last
with all your travels
with all your suffering
I would caress you
in every step of your life
caress and kiss you
me who hated you so much
who suffered so much from you
now I love you
all the yous
you ever were.
Twenty years twenty
passed since those two weeks
that changed your life
the last week of August

and the first week of September
nineteen seventy two
everyday changed your life
making you a poet
writing in Hebrew
in your land
and not a writer
writing in a foreign language
in a foreign land
twenty years
in which you tried so hard to escape
not loving yourself
not wanting to be like the others
writing about suicide
angry at God
twenty
with asthma and without asthma
with allergies and skin sores
angina and digestive pain
crazy eating, women problems
trying to escape reality
trying to escape Israeli society
travelling abroad as much as possible
and coming back
to Paris, specially to Paris
dreaming about living there
marrying a French woman
emigrating to France, what else,
but she, what else,
just not to go back to France,
each one his own escape
always weak in front of women
and difficult to make changes

you are still here
with all the oxymoron and all the morons
possible inside your head
feeling the most here
and most there that is possible
so close to the land of Israel
and so far away from the State of Israel.

I love you Moshe
and I enjoy writing it
at last I love you
with all that you did
and all that you failed
and all that you fucked up
and all that you are ridiculous
and with all your running
away from here and escaping again
and again escaping
and still, staying here

I love you
Moroccan, Spanish, Sephardi,
European, looks Ashkenazi,
Western, Eastern, Mediterranean,
Middle-eastern, Palestinian,
African, French
with all the things you are and aren't
I love you crazy and insane
and most logical
but then it is you
it is all the you that made me
and I love you.

*

I embrace you
go to the world
love it
give it all you have to give
even what it can't accept
give the world all your love
all you have learned
and your experience
in all your previous lives
it won't accept
but it needs you
the world needs you
it needs your love
give it
but don't expect any reward
go to the world
go to God
go
don't be afraid anymore
I caress you good-bye
go your way
I kiss you good-bye
go.

*

This land in which I was not born
said the immigrant
this land in which my children were born
now I leave it
like a man leaves his lover
who cheated on him
like a man leaves the mother

of his children
in pain in joy in suffocation in liberation
that's the way I leave this land
in which I did not plant a tree
in which I did not seek revenge
and if you say this is a descent
I will tell you, said that same immigrant,
it is a descent meant to go up
and if this is your face
I am an ass
and if these are your legs
I am a wheelchair
everyday in my land is suffocation
and everyday abroad is oxygen
I travel twice a year abroad
to have enough oxygen to breath here
and not suffocate
in this ghetto, in this mellahh,
this land in which I was not born
my children were born here
this land
didn't rejoice toward me
and didn't give me joy
nor did I rejoice toward her
in spite of not having another land
beside her
not having
but, said the man angry
with tears in his eyes,
it is impossible for things
to be done infinitely
just for lack
of alternatives.

*

My childhood,
a black flower I did not pick,
Tetuan mountains around her
Arab children shouting
“awadel yahoud”
and throwing stones at us
on the way to school
hugging the girls in class
the old Arab who touched my chin
the Arab beggar
to whom I always gave a coin
my mother always knowing what’s good for me
the smacks I got from her when I lit matches
and almost burnt the house
hugging the son of the Rabbi at ten
Saturday night at grandma and grandpa’s home
and shouting and noise the whole family
my cousin getting on my nerves
I hit my cousins
the vacation house in Restinga and tennis
the motorcyclist who broke his hand
my daddy’s toy store
he brings me a red Mercedes
me and my brother breaking it with a screwdriver
my sick brother who died at 8
the scissors I threw at my sister
my brother Levi disappears
and we’re looking for him again
the recurrent dream of the falling lamps
private lessons in Arabic
the giant house made of granite
Levi and me climbing the walls

Levi and me not going to the solfege class
and going to play soccer
the cakes we bought after the Shabbath prayer
my uncle hitting me when I
touched a moving car
the cruel stick of the teacher
breaking the stick after class
the three loyal classroom friends
the club I started with my cousin Levi
mama and dad travel to the U.S.
to take care of my brother
I am left with grandma and grandpa
in the vacation home playing and swimming
the one handed French tourist
suffocation
asphyxiation
suffocation
my childhood
a black flower I did not pick
a black flower I did not smell
I did not remember
I did not forget
I did not love
I did not appreciate
I did not hate
I did not understand

my childhood
I don't miss you
nor your smells
nor your wealth
everything was asphyxiating
pressuring

my childhood
I don't miss the famous Alliance school
maker of students in the universities
of Strasbourg, Madrid, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv
I don't miss the Jewish community
nor the family who always knows what's best
for the others
nor the feeling of superiority
for being true Sephardim
nor the smell of Ladino nor the ballooning wealth
nor the imagined honor of the family
nor the synagogue I was always forced to go
my childhood my lost childhood
my insensitive childhood
where are you, where did you go
if you ever came.

*

Every Friday evening
all the grandchildren
gathered on the steps
of Papa Levi's giant store
and waited to be called one by one
to receive money for Shabbath.
First he used to call
the grandchildren bearing his name
sons of his sons
then the grandchildren bearing his name
sons of his daughters
who received less
and then the others, me among them,
and he called me Mosselito,

who received even less,
and then we all compared
how much we received
and I always was jealous of the others
who received more than me
and the same day I wasted everything,
they said I had holes in my hands.

*

On Sabbaths my grandfather used to sit
in the middle of the living room
his thumb on his mouth
every few hours going to the bathroom
to smoke a cigarette
they called it Sabbath diarrhea.

*

My grandfather was very rich
every five years he traded his Plymouth
but not the chauffeur
who stayed with him
his whole life.
Just before he emigrated to Israel
he caught emphysema and died
didn't do what I did
died staked to machines
physician's machines
who keep the angel of death unemployed.

*

Out of four who came to Israel from Tetuan
three left
all the cousins now
in Paris, Madrid and New York
one by one they left
married abroaders
and left
they understood
this was not for them
where everyone categorizes them
as something they are not
forced to defend something
they couldn't identify with
when they say
you are a Moroccan
or an oriental
and you have to defend the Moroccans
to whom you can't feel affiliated
you have no choice but to become arrogant
with the Ashkenazi especially
for their arrogance and their cultural ignorance
to the eastern Jews and their customs
and they always repeat that same sentence
half funny half sad
but you don't look Moroccan!

I once said to someone
after this sentence
“yeah, that's true, I had an operation
I took off the tail
and now I don't look Moroccan.”

*

In front of my house
with the granite walls
there was a mountain
covered in trees
in front of my house
the police stood
called Consul Murphy street
in front of my house
my only home
where I drown the years
that made me
till I arrived in Israel
to the years that broke me

since the third of September
nineteen seventy two
I collect the pieces

I try to find some logic
to the puzzle
with my words
I try to find warmth
human warmth that always scares me,
I collect the pieces
and stay an orphan
in my words.

*

I had everything in Morocco
I had everything
my grandfather was
the richest man in town

but I was always anxious
a sensitive boy
in a pressure-cooker family
I had everything in Morocco
except what I needed
air to breathe time to think
time to create
to be myself
to be a child
and dream.

*

What's going to happen to you
Moroccan prince
what's going to happen to you
spoiled child
who never made his bed
what's going to happen with you
in the land of Israel
when you won't be able to shout
Fatima bring me a glass of water
Fatima I am hungry
what's going to become of you
Moroccan prince
here in the land of Israel
where everyone has to work.

*

The father of my grandfather Mimon
used to ask my father everyday
when? when is it happening?
(the State of Israel)
and he answered
it is coming
just coming
he died in 1946
he had a grocery store
before dawn
he used to put bags of food
near the houses of the poor
so they wouldn't know
and wouldn't be ashamed
he never made any money
like my grandfather Moshe
but thanks to him and to his deeds
I live today in Jerusalem.

*

My grandfather died of diabetes
when I was four or five
I remember his completely bald head
covering his head
like a dream
he walks in the house
he is ill in bed
after his death
my father grew a beard
my grandfather made a lot of money
and lost a lot of money alternately

he willed me a building
so I'd have the money to study
because I was named after him.
I was the grandson of my grandfather.
They say I am like him.

*

My Grandfather Moshe
stood with suitcases
ready to travel to Argentina
to manage a milk company.
He was going for six months
then the family would
follow.

My grandmother and her mother
stood in front of him and
cried
wo wo he is going and won't be back
wo wo
he is going forever.
They stood and cried

my grandfather dropped the suitcases
and said
I stay here

and that's how I wasn't born in Argentina.

*

Where is my house now
where are the walls where I grew up now
who is in my house now
the house my grandfather built
built every stone in it
the house in which I played with my brother
and run in its corridors
who lives in my house now
Arabs live in my home now
and I
live in an Arab house
the immigrant who lived here
may be writing poems now.

*

Years
Years you didn't remember your childhood
and after you
remembered
years
you didn't want to write about it
you didn't want to write
what everyone expects
from a Moroccan poet
you knew every poem
about Tetuan and about the couscous
will be published
and that's why
you didn't write the poems
inside of you

years you walk
with a tree that has no roots
years
the roots
are in the sky.

*

I went to three meetings
of the Bnei Akiva boy scouts
and heard many times
hebraya hebraya hebraya
and didn't understand
all the aya aya aya
I never understood the togetherness
of the sabras
not in the scouts
nor in the school
nor in the army
a lone wolf
in the company of snakes.

*

The name of my grandmother is Mercedes
her son the doctor
always buys Mercedes
He was the gynecologists of
some of the king's wives.
In the early seventies
a Zionist minister
of Morocco
told him it was time to leave
He went to Madrid
then to Nice,

tried a few times to get a job
in an Israeli hospital
and failed.
He didn't make his Aliyah
didn't leave
and wasn't disappointed.

*

My father never made it here
he didn't want to come either
he wanted Canada, Spain, Venezuela
but my mother said that from Morocco
she would only leave to the land of Israel
he always said this won't suit him
and he was right.
I saw him
failing from business to business
until he got emphysema
asphyxiated from the neglect
of the Ashkenazi bureaucracy
and died.

*

The head of the absorption center
at the time of the government of
the Yiddishe mama
and this was in 1973
and not in the fifties
said to my parents
that we don't have a high enough
cultural level to live in Jerusalem

my parents
went back enraged
to the small apartment
and decided to leave the country
it happened every two months
for four years
the winds blew to the immigrating direction
I think this caused a genetic change in me
and it happens twice a day
I would like to meet the little principal
the son of a bitch
and spit on him.

*

For years I used to walk and discuss
in my head
I am religious I am not religious
I am secular I am not secular
discuss with imaginary Rabbis
and with atheists in my head
for years without concluding
my head was a theological soccer camp.

*

Every Yom Kippur eve
I redeemed all my sins
when the Rabbi came
to slaughter the chickens
we had raised a few days earlier
me and my brothers
and we cried trying to escape

and the Rabbi says
ze kaparateja
this is your redemption
and beats the chicken
and says again ze kaparateja
and blood is everywhere
and sand on the floor to dry the blood
and this way
a chicken per person
he slaughters
and this way every Yom Kippur
in every slaughter
I redeem all my sins.

*

I shout my right
to be different
to be Sephardi
to be traditional
in the Israeli society
not right and not left
I demand my right
to stop feeling
strange and detached
I the Israeli.

*

*The last words
of the immigrant*

the
more I explain
the less I understand

Watch

Watch the green leaves
Dropping and falling
From the wind
If it didn't shake the tree
How long could they stand
Watch
Our love
Falling
And who will stop it
If it is a leaf
The land will bury it
If it is a fruit
A tree shall rise.

Promises

You didn't promise anything
like lovers do
but you fulfilled
you didn't promise wealth
you didn't promise happiness
faithfulness
or a long marriage
but what you didn't promise
you kept.

I didn't promise you anything
not a big house
not infinite love
or a long marriage
but what I didn't promise
I kept
and what I won't promise
I will fulfill.

Lisbon

While writing poems to you
in a cafe
in front of the birds
the painter painted me
smiled to me
while I wrote you poems
and wrote that he was painting me
all the world was invaded by love
our love
filled the world.

In the place where we sat

In the place where we sat
before we made love
and discussed the last tango in Paris
a couple sat today in the sun
I don't know what they were talking about
they sure weren't talking about our last tango.

Can a poem help

You buy clothes
and I buy records
you cough
and I have hemorrhoids.

When discussions go well into the night
and the feeling is that only the wall understands
that all paths lead to a dead end road
that everything is gray and gray and gray
and nothing is white or black

You wear yellow clothes
and I go to Fendelkreiss
looking for a way to fly abroad for a month
or trying by all means to avoid you

How can a poem help...

If not for your

If not for your smile
if not for your anger
if not for your screams
if not for your gaiety

I would walk
the fields
barefoot
looking for spines
to fall upon

I would walk between countries
stumbling and falling
like an ant without a nest
like a sun without people

if not for your smile
I would be walking naked
from cafe to cafe in Paris
collecting fume donations
if not for your joy of living

I would be walking in Spain
from bar to bar
eating shrimps and calamaris tapas
looking for cheap shoes to wear
instead of worn boots

if not for your smile
what would have happened to my poems
what would have happened to my poems...

Ups and downs

There were many ups
but I always wrote in the downs
every second day thinking of divorce
like i think about emigrating
every second day thinking it's the end.

I got married for six months
never thought it would hold longer
six months passed

nine years now
I am with you
and you are with me.

Every second day I rediscover you
every second month I reall in love
every second year I chose you
to be miss universe
I touch your breasts
dripping honey
and above sex there is warmth
above warmth smell
touching
joining
mating
hope
tikkun
every second day I say to myself it is the end

every second day
every second month
every second year

The ships anchor in the harbor.

When you dream distant into yourself

When you dream distant into yourself
into a dream-balloon somewhere
and I don't know what you are thinking
I don't love you
you scare me
when you repress your feelings
when you hear without listening
you scare me
and I don't love you.

Your Thousand Lovers

Sometimes when I lie near you
I think of your thousand lovers
those you loved
those who bought you
those who deluded you
who exploited you
who took advantage of your dreams
those you used
those who desired you
those who used you
I think of your thousand lovers
think of them and I want you
more, think of them and become
angry with myself
angry with them
angry with my abysmal loneliness
with my fear from women
with my fear from you
when I think of your thousand lovers
about your crazy life before me
I can't understand what happened to us
two lunatics, how two lunatics
become after x years boring
deadly boring, when I think of your
thousand lovers I love you more, I hate you
I want you, you repel me
when I think of your thousand lovers.
When I think you are the only lover in my life

I am proud, I am angry
I want you, I want to kill you
when I think about
my gorgeous loneliness, universal
about my fear from women,
from the thousand women
who wanted me, from whom I ran away
and drove away.
When I think of your thousand lovers
and see you staring at me with your naiveté
I want to embrace you, I want to strangle you
I feel I am going crazy
where are you? Where are you?
I want you, I don't know you
don't recognize you, who are you?
When I think of your thousand lovers
of those who loved you
those enchanted by your eagerness
those who bought you with money, with presents
those who hated you
those who wanted to dominate you
who am I, when I think of those
who visited you before me, before I knew you
who are you when I think
of your thousand lovers
who am I when I want to lie with other women
to be with a thousand women who will love me
or not, I will love or not.
Who am I within your thousand lovers
within and without your thousand lovers?

Come, the tears have fallen

Come come, the tears have already fallen
you have cried enough a star would dry
the coma of our pain cannot tell
who is going to feed the rain.

Come come on you can cope with it
you are stronger than mountains and seas
stronger than waves and winds.
We have seen bones walk again.

We have seen the dying bird fly
the poor become rich
the amputated hand grow again.

We have seen in the mirage of our imagination
the desert become a river and its water
was never enough for our thirst.

So, now come come again
your tears are sweet.

Time To Go

And if it's time to go I'll go
but you rarely know when the time has come
to do the right thing
to leave the things that have perished
when they look as if
they were just born today.

It's a place that once was home
or a friend that was once best
or a woman you never loved
a street where cars are torn

or a book, a poem with too many lines
a line for years in my mind
If it's time to go I'll go if I ever know.

You never asked for anything

You never asked for anything
when I offered money you just smiled
you had nothing but nothing you wanted,
and then
you left twenty years ago, the smile on your face
the laughter melted to your skin
you didn't say why, you didn't say where
there was no one to ask you were
and you weren't as well.

Now here you send me this beautiful flower
so much like me so much like your memory
she says she's my daughter,
she says you said so
on your deathbed, you never said why you left
to France, you never said you'll be back
half you half me.

Like you, she doesn't ask for a thing.
She just smiles.

Nothing I'd rather do

There is nothing I'd rather do
than lie with you in bed
this cold sunny winter day
without an erection.

Kiss your lips again and again
smell your skin and your hair's shampoo
not say a word for hours
just a smile from time to time.

Nothing I'd rather do than sit and talk with you
while only the streets remember there is a war.

Salty Love

I came all this way to ask for your hand
my camels need water
my hands, olive oil.

I came all this way to sit by this tree
your hands never smile
your breasts always do.

In my Ketubah I give you
100 poems people will dream about
and one day
pay
100 camels for them.

I came all this way to ask for both hands
but more than that I came
to ask for your tears

those you cried before you knew me
before you dreamt me, I come for
those tears in the jar
to taste the saltiness of your love.

She writes a diary

She sun on her face cafe Friday noon
writing her diary it's not the first time
I see her
we frequent the same cafes, she ignores me
how lovely, her face changes
from line to line
now she is almost crying
looks like she's writing in jail,
then it returns to normal
and then she smiles she is running
naked on the beach
the sun on her breast and face,
and then it's pain again.
Lady, I have seen you in your secrets
so many times
and wanted to write this poem in front of you
but I didn't have a pen,
no notebook like I used to
in those early days when words were waves
floating into my hands, then you go inside
the winter's sun is too hot to write
I still see you and can decipher
all your secrets
and I want to tell you,
I want to see you everyday
every day writing your diary, know you love you,
be afraid to say something
that might turn into words
but instead of that I am thinking

that the war is near
half of the people sitting in this cafe
will die, half, I mean it,
it's either you with your diary or me,
pure chance,
either me or my wife, my son or my daughter,
I wish I didn't believe my thoughts,
and all this time
you are still there writing,
turning the pages back and forth
writing such wonderful words,
tense and intense,
and your face changing from silver to blue
from gold to black, what's a young girl like you
writing such things, obscure and wonderful.

Sane at last

It's as if you are not here
you don't listen
and when you talk things don't make any sense
when did you disappear,
when gone away from the world,
years ago I did not notice,
or just an hour ago, have I changed
or have you,
or did our directions change,
I am not even asking you to come back,
there is no coming back,
no place in the past for both of us
we can now let ourselves distance
and hope to meet or try to force it,
but force is not love,
I am not even disappointed or crying
like I used to
it's like I am living in a cave full of light,
like a dream
where waking up is impossible,
I am not in despair, not in pain,
where am I, is this enlightenment or
dissociation from the world, am I.

Speech of the man after the birth of his first son

look, he said,
while eating a croissant quickly
and drinking capuccino
she is so busy with the child
she doesn't even think of herself
her whole world is the boy
so so how is it possible
that she'll pay any attention to me
attention I need so badly.
don't misunderstand me
I love her
but also need some attention.

Speech of the man after the birth of his second daughter

look, he said,
after he finished his cafe au lait
I was always the one to concede
but one day I suddenly felt
I couldn't compromise anymore
I can't communicate with her anymore
and I don't hide our discussions anymore
and the tensions, I don't mind if
everybody knows
I try to survive day by day
somehow continue another day
but relationship,
there's no relationship anymore.
oh... I need some warmth
someone to give me some warmth,
he said while smiling to the girl
with the enormous earrings
sitting with her two friends
in the table near us,
how I need some warmth...

The Speech of Rabbi Akiva

how hard this separation
from this woman I love
or loved
how hard this departure
if there was no love in it
if there were only fights and anger
we could say
this separation is better than joining
but how difficult this separation
to set out for a new road
from this woman who bore my children
who gave me a home
who taught me to love
who saved me from the dark
who helped me study
how long and hard this separation.

The Body

As the tensions grew
and silence invaded our lives
sex improved
intercourse grew longer
fuller
and more
communicative

as we learned
each other's body
silence grew longer
conversations became
autistic
each one in his corner
quiet and shouting
roaring and still
only
the body
could express love
hope and frustration
all the possibilities
and the impossibility of being fulfilled.

Between me

Between me and the crown
she stood
she
stood between me and the crown
and I knew I should make peace with her
to reach the crown
but I fought
and fought her
till I reached the crown.

Good being alone

It's so good being alone
I write poems to you
I sing the trees
it's so good being alone
on my way to London
on my way to Paris
on my way to you
I sing the trees
the snow and the wing
I sing Europe
I sing you a love son.

It's so good being alone
wonderful loneliness
of coming back to you.

A Secret Kiss

Rescue
eyes that look at me and are not

distant

from a sea without waves
I never saw

grapes I did not eat

days I did not live

still
they are memories like ships
they are branches rowing east

and behind my hands
a kiss
I never gave.

Your Breasts

Your breast falling on my chest
I wonder
Is this
aging
or love

are these the flowers of our past
or the roots of our future

somebody knocks on the door
asking

if there is somebody alive in this house.

I will sing you of rivers and seas

I will sing you of rivers and seas
of waves that never see thunders
I will tell you of ships
and whales that eat honey at night

I will sing you my love of ladies
that left their houses in search of fishes
I will tell you of jellyfishes
that became sirens

look at me, my eyes are glass
my back is a map

map of unknown lands
map of future settlers.

Look at me I am the moon with its own light
I am the sun that doesn't blind.

Love is never blind.

When love was blind our eyes could see
the beauty in our ugliness.
Now love is wise and things are nice
all is dead around us in this house.

When love was our eyes we were
blind to the beauty of the flower
every plant in the universe was inside
our funny looking sunny glasses.

When time has come to live
how do you say good-bye
poems and songs are nothing
but another shameless lie

another excuse to keep talking
about things that don't use words.

My Poems

My poems don't open doors
they close them.

Each door opened by the human race
has brought more atrocities.

There are very long Saturdays
and wars that end in less than a week.

I am tired of peace agreements
I just want to see less people dead.

That's why I have closed the doors
to all the cemeteries
with my poems.

Highs and Lows

We don't know the place
where Moses was buried
nor where Hitler's grave is.

One saw the back of God
the other showed us the back of Satan.
We won't be able to clone them.

The Transsexual's Lament

What I thought was the solution
only brought the real problem

what kind of woman am I
if I can't give birth to another woman?

What people now see in me is
the woman who was a man

and I who was never a man
will never be a woman.

I am God's mistake
and I cannot fix it.

But my imagination is stronger
than the power of God.

My Friend

I never wanted to be your enemy
I don't know how it happened
each time I reached out my hand
you thought I was going to beat you
all I wanted was to say hello.

I still don't want to be your enemy
but each time you smile
I ask myself what are your intentions
if your smile is just trying
to make me give you something I don't have.

We don't talk anymore
our words are masks
behind untrusting faces
words that should be communication
have become weapons against the light.

Global Economy

I will work for peanuts
if you fire me
or I will set fire to your house
I see now that you have made of me
a commodity
my work my life my wife my children
will be slave to you
and I will work for peanuts
like the monkey in your circus did
and my daughter if she's beautiful
she will whore for you
if she's not your houses she will clean
I will work for peanuts
if this is what you ask
you call this progress, realistic economy,
the global village,
but it's just as always the rich against the poor
you win I loose
just give me some peanuts. Again?

It's again
"It's going to get worse before it gets better"
while politicians play again the game of power
for which they were elected or not,
they are in power
and now they have to show everybody
they are strong.

It's again cries of children and mothers
fear of living and dying
the world was never better or worse
The end of the world is coming
says the Muezzin says the Rabbi
says the mystic
but,
the end was here all the time

the world has not even begun.

Promises

Who are you in the morning
and who are you at night
do your dreams wake you up
when you see those sights
who's your mother who's your father
who's the son you never had
when will you lead your life like an ant
and where is the freedom you promised us
where is the way you said was clear
and where the peace you knew was near

I heard your promises and I didn't trust you
I read your lips but your tongue was short
the words of your lecture were kind
but you stopped in the middle of the sentence

The Price Of A Diamond

*"What's the sound of one hand
clapping?" - Van Morrison*

They cut the hands of women, men
and eight year old children
to get diamonds to you.

People enslaved worse than trees
and you demonstrate for the whales
the forests and the penguins
with a diamond on your finger.

Next time you receive a present
think of little hands that will never caress
their children
think of fingers chopped to make yours beautiful
think of amputated legs and hands

Think of the future of amputated Africa.

The Land Of Freedom

Nobody is going to give you freedom
you'll have to take it
and take the risks, even
in a democratic country
the only freedom you'll get is
to be like they expect you to be
to be like the others you see.

But to be free you'll have to be different
you'll have to pull the fences
and to be ridiculed, laughed at,
those who love you
telling you that you are crazy, that they
can't understand what you're after,
that there is nothing else
that you are wrong,
that you are destroying yourself,
when you hear all these together
you'll know you have conquered some land
in the land of freedom.

Cosmic DNA

When she was already crazy
she used to sit by her old father and caress him
for hours, he would think about smoking
and cancer
behind her eyes her statuesque beauty
sometimes would flash
as a reminder of all the things that must pass.

By night we could hear her screaming like a wolf
then she would disappear to the asylum
for days or weeks
and the week she died from over medication
flashes of her beauty could still be seen
below the open sky.

By now the worms have had it all
eaten the beauty and the madness
the drugs and the flesh,
memory still flowing out somewhere
between Andromeda and the Milky Way
neutrinos of beauty and cosmic DNA
forever her beauty in my memory
as long as I live.

Kloom

So you ask me for the meaning
of the Hebrew word “kloom”.
Kloom is usually used as nothing
but its real meaning is something
something that is close to nothing
a small, minimal thing, something nothing
like, say, a grain of sand
compared with the shore,
a man compared with humanity,
or a planet compared with a galaxy,
or a galaxy compared with the universe,
relativity in one word: kloom.

Birds on Temple Mount

When night gives birth to day
I can smell bad sex
in the Seizieme quarter in Paris
see the young rich whore in her red Mercedes,
Rue Tilsitt,
ashes falling in Las Ramblas,
last tapas going to the dirty floor.
I can smell the smoke in a yellow cab
in New York
but most of all I see birds circling
the temple mount
at the precise hour when God thinks again, tired,
of destroying the world for it sins, and sees
the birds trying to transmit an ancient message
in an ancient tongue
long forgotten, they just sing it
as Jews praying for years in synagogues
all over the world
in a language no one understands,
and when understood it's the wrong way,
the shadow that wins over the light.

We live in caves and we believe we see
the light of day.

After the flood we could explain

The old men said that the trees were pale
but the young couldn't remember
the old men said that the light was dim
but the young couldn't care less.

The old men warned but the young men
said they were crazy that their time
had passed, that it was all inventions
and light never travelled faster.

And then there was an earthquake
and still the young could explain everything
but the old men were dead or deaf.

They couldn't speak or warn anymore
when the flood started raining over their heads
only the young could still swim
for a few more hours.

The Buddha from Afghanistan

The great scandal, a god of 20 meters
has been destroyed
the UN and all the civilized world are surprised
they would do anything to save the stones
from becoming sand again
Buddha, would he mind,
but like Abraham, the son of Terah, the Taliban
has shown the world its misery,
the UN will be holy when it shouts
the same way for every person killed
or are the statues more still more important
than people.

Good-bye

My brother died
and I said
good-bye
to my brother.

My father died
and I said
good-bye
to my father.

My best friend died and I said
good-bye to my friend

and all this time all I wanted
was to say good-bye to myself,

to say good-bye to myself
and not to anybody else.

Sunny light of spring

So this is why people fight over this land
the soft sun of the spring
the light over the cypress trees
the green on the desert,
so this is why god's eyes watch
this place from the beginning of the year
until it ends, watches the trees
and misses the people
dying to get the sun, to get to the sea
to see it from the hills and the mountains
they move and move as they always did
since a king poet sang its movements
and we dance along, dance along a trip-dance
a death-dance, a kiss-dance.

Postcards

My poems are postcards to dead people
sailing in seas of death,
on their way to freedom misery was their fate
and the pictures of them on the other side
are the faces I have never seen.

People of Sepharad, unknown faces of my life
mysteries of my soul, I send you postcards
every week
and your weakness is my strength

Genetic memories drunk with mother's milk
geographical places in the map of the heart
postcards from Lucena, Seville and Granada
places first seen in words then in sights
postcards of the soul, postcards of the past
that never was, the future that refuses to be.

Les entrailles du poete

When they did the autopsy they
found pages and more pages
full of poems written in seventy languages
more and more pages and no blood
no gallbladder and no heart only words

each line a different tongue, and they brought
the biggest linguists until they deciphered
every language
but one, one who sounded so ethereal
even the professors started to cry

and people read the sounds of these poems
and they could not understand a word
not one word resembled any known word
in any language
but when they heard the sounds
they cried and cried
and when their tears ended they were happy
like never before, like never known.
Right or wrong
If you think you've got the answer
I am here to prove you wrong
if you think you are wrong
I am here to prove you right.

Tears waiting to fall

Some tears they have to fall
sooner or later, they wait for years
in the kidneys, stick to the liver, the heart
the eyes, the eyebrows, until they fall, and
whatever was dry becomes wet, and
on the wet land more rain will fall,
and wherever there is rain flood will come
until these tears we hide for generations fall
upon our chest, fall upon our graves.

Right or wrong

If you think you've got the answer
I'm here to prove you wrong
If you think you are wrong
I am here to prove you right.

Another place

Take me somewhere else lead me
to a place I've never seen
the waves are closing in on me
too many words, too many words
I don't understand, too many sentences
that don't make any sense to me
just make me long for another place.

A place of sand and sea, of little waves
that sing like birds, like coconut trees
a place of dying cars, a place of women

A place where no one has been
or too many have
a used place where war has not arrived only
been heard by old men with decaying teeth.

The tea never arrived

Planes flew above us
trains left the station
but the tea never arrived.

We drank the water
we drank the juice
but the tea never arrived.

We waited until we forgot
what we were waiting for
but the tea never arrived.

We heard bombs outside some said
it was a war, other said just a robbery
but the tea never arrived.

Some of us grew old, very old
our teeth dropped out, our beard was white
but the tea never arrived.

But no one ever asked about the tea
no one really remembered what
we were waiting for, and it didn't help
the tea never arrived.

Les poetes maudits

She was an old poet and I was a young one,
and she said to me, look
the best ones die young
they write such great poems that the angels
come to take them
they leave the others here to suffer
more and more
from their poems and their words.

Come to think about it, les poetes maudits
are not those who die young
but those who write poems when they are grown
when they should be feeding families
and paying mortgages
when they should be going out to work
at 8 o'clock
and they don't do it, believing they are stronger
than gravitation
believing that their words, if they could be heard,
that their words can make this place
a better planet.

We Wee

We wake up we fall we go to sleep we
dream, nightmares, we wake up we
take our fears to the streets, we
build a world from our fears we have
no place in it, we go to sleep we live
in worlds where our hopes have gone
to sleep, we drink we eat we make love we
look for words to describe all this useless
madness, in the wee wee hours I saw the bird
of Solomon he had in his tongue all the
secrets of the world but he could not
sing he was too sad his eyes said
he was too sad for this beautiful day sun
shinning our skin burning we go to work
we don't believe in miracles we create them
we are gods, we are trash to be recycled
when we are not gods anymore when we
are we, when we are not we anymore.

A peaceful shabbatt, rest in peace

First there was the neighbor
who didn't stop looking at my wife's breasts
then it was my mother
who decided I should do a Ph.D. in math
because she saw this poet
who was also a mathematician
she wants a son with a Ph.D.
she would trade me for the diploma
then my wife's nephew wanted me
to tape a cd for him while his wife started
speaking about religious people
and how she couldn't stand the fact that women
have no place in synagogues
so I just asked her if she would go
to the synagogue if there were more room
she said no then my sister told everybody
how she convinced one ultra orthodox woman
to stop having children after she had ten
and the doctors asked her to stop,
even the rabbi, and yes I forgot
my son also said that he hated me
"I hate this person!" his words
no wonder I went to sleep at ten o'clock
and woke up with angina at 2 A.M.
and what did I do? The shabbatt dishes
were there waiting for me.
Sunday came I went to the post office
and there was a check waiting for me,
I will make it to the next shabbatt,
there will be more food.

The shore of the other

By the border of the sea
between water and sand
my life is born
between salt and water
my eyes turn blue
between shore and sand
my skin glitters
I am the one coming
from the other side of the sea
the other shore
the one which people say it doesn't exist
at the end of the sea
I am the sun that awakens
the sun that sets
I am
the other.

Arms

Take me to lands of no cold
where the summer never ends
where clouds never show
where people never cry

Take me to the clouds of no tears
to people who never saw fear
to people who never had to decide
where to live or when to leave

Open your arms to me but do not kill me
I am tired of dying life after life
and coming back to die again

Open your heart to me and I will not eat it
I will caress its beats and bits
then through fire we will walk and kill the heat.

Human Sacrifice

is not dead.

I must ask how many people
are killed for CNN, the new god
the new Baal the new Ashtoret,
bring us your children to die
and we'll cover you, you will be right,
bring us your children
to the altar, we will have more ratings,
die for the sake of Pharaoh
for the afterlife of share-owners,
die and be right, kill and be cursed,
die and be blessed.

Beware of modern gods asking for your life,
hands and legs,
beware, they are everywhere.

I definitely want an answer to this question...

Six Million

When we say 6 million
what do we mean?

We mean that six millions Jews
according to the Nazi's definition
were killed,
anyone who had a Jewish great grandfather
could either be killed for being a Jew
or be a Nazi if nobody knew.

Do we accept the definition of the Nazis
for people that didn't want to be Jew
and were they alive would be annoyed
if they were called Jews?
So, now, even dead, their race and entity
was defined by their killers.

What does all this mean?

It means that science invented the idea
that Races exist.
This was real Science in the nineteenth century.
What next? Genetic extermination?
Genetic races? Hears about it already

the Jews have a specific Gene.

Which means?

People from a religion that accepts everyone
and has mixed with every nation on earth
was killed for being a scientific race.

Which also means?

That the Germans exterminated not only Jews
but also their own people and race accusing
them of being Jews.
It means that scientific truth can lead to hell.

Strip poetry

Pour it down words like tears words like waves
pour it down until it bleeds people love the blood
not the words not the world behind them
pour it down till there is no more coagulated
blood in your veins, pour it down until
there are no more sounds, no more throat,
pour it down like an orange juice,
like lemons from caves, like olives without oil,
pour it down until you have no more words,
pour it down, pour it until you have
nothing left, they want you naked,
naked not only from your clothes
naked from your skin, naked from your bones,
naked from your hormones,
they want you transparent, bleeding
and invisible, dead and nonexistent,
they want you all and nothing
you are never good enough for the fearful
frustrated you have never gone far enough
while they have never left their room
and you have traveled the moon, but no
it's not enough
castrate yourself, but it's not enough
cut your finger, your hand until you can't write
but you've not gone far enough
amputate your legs until you can't walk
but it's not far enough
this is the new circus of poetry we want you
famous and unknown, we want you killed

by a fascist, dying of cancer, dying in car
accidents, we will interview you
again and again
but we won't read your poems
until you are dead, we want to interview you
about your divorces, your terminal illness,
your mother and how she used to beat you
about your father who raped you,
poets do it, it's the striptease of poetry,
poetry of the striptease,
you want publicity don't you, you have to do it
and people will read you, get drunk, get beaten,
get busted, beat someone, get some news,
be a whore, be a pimp, fuck your own mother,
we love you but we won't read your poems,
be a killer, we will interview you, we will praise
you, be unknown and be famous,
you are selling out man, you are selling out
way before you can sell a book,
you are selling out and selling in, sailing out and
sailing away from
humanity.

SELF PORTRAIT OF THE POET IN A FAMILY MIRROR

Everyday he asks himself
what's the purpose of his poems
and for whom does he write
everyday he decides to stop writing
to publish a book immediately
to be in a literary clan and make contacts
so he can publish
and in spite of all he always writes
in incredible quantities
everyday he asks himself
about the purpose of the world
his purpose in the world
and everyday he changes his mind
a strange man, very strange in my eyes,
everyday he decides to leave the country
to divorce, to have another child,
to love another woman,
to relax, to change his work, to write a novel,
to write a poem, to speak with editors,
to travel abroad
to write to Marlene to talk to Beni,
to study medicine,
to leave medicine, to give a lecture
on vaccinations,

to attack vivisection, or against
the government, to make a revolution
in his life and his country, to do justice,
to be a criminal
to steal, to return what he stole
and what he didn't steal
to put the tefilinn starting tomorrow,
to keep the shabbatt,
to send his wife to the Mikveh,
to make love during menstruation,
to leave everything
sit down and write no matter what,
to publish in Hadarim
in Moznayim, to publish a literary review
how many decisions in one day,
a man of decisions
he can think
about seven things at the same time
and indeed his head works all the time
the fuses burn every seven days
he thought about moving, buying a car
having a license, closing his bank account
buying the Passion According To Matthew
selling the sound system
repent, become an atheist,
travel abroad, write a letter to the chief rabbi
and pray to God that the rabbinic court will fall
he cursed the rabbis but didn't hate them
they are not more idiots than the others
afraid to talk to literary editors
afraid of examinations, of being criticized
afraid of publishing wants to be famous
as the year passed he became a frustrated poet

but not frustrated enough to get a degree
he rather hates literature, especially prose
but poetry too,
poets and writers get on his nerves
leftists too,
he doesn't get along at all with Ashkenazis
they somehow
always seem to be strangers to him
was scared of the Russian immigrations,
but was happy they came
he never spoke with an Arab
more than ten minutes
he never had an Arab friend, once in France
almost became friends with an Arab
but of course no, as a matter of fact
he doesn't have many friends either
even with himself the situation is not that easy
he was dismissed from the army
because of his auditory problems, a week ago
he hears but only when he wants to
he hears Bach all the time
even when the system is off
he likes Torah classes, and Talmud too
but hates authority, any authority but God
hates politicians, rabbis, doctors, judges, editors
hates them but not really
hates them theoretically
when he meets them he pities them
for thinking they are important
because of their position
they look ridiculous to him, there are days
when all people seem ridiculous to him
a very strange guy this guy,

very strange in my eyes and yes,
why doesn't he learn from experience
they said you'll be thirty and you'll see
he didn't see anything and now
he doesn't hear, what's there to see
that you can be an idiot he always knew
honestly he would leave everything
and emigrate
leave his wife his children for two years
but return after two months, you can never know
he may do it, he is a psycho
but not enough to get a degree
he may divorce but he has no reason
beside the fact that he once decided
he will divorce
married as an experiment for six months
now he is already married six years
his wife is nice understands him
and puts pressure on him
loves his children but all this
just drives him crazy
he is a Sagittarius
more exactly a Libra ascendant
Sagittarius and the moon in the first house
looks for freedom, scared of limitations
once he thought he'd make a living
from literature
at the age of thirty
wrote seven novels (where are they now?)
once he wrote a novel in three weeks
but didn't find a publisher
wrote a thousand poems or more
but published thirty or less

and a poetry book that sold seven copies
some say he is talented
poets expecting him to say they are talented
talent for sale
he thinks he is a genius
of Bachian proportions
but he is not sure anymore, he thought once,
look it is years of frustration
without publishing almost
years of searching
he went to study natural medicine in France
he always has malaises
colds, asthma
less than once but not brilliant
the truth is I wouldn't befriend him so easily
he is strange, moody
sometimes unbearable, yawns
near people who bore him
he doesn't notice, his wife tells him
he likes to think about himself but also avoids it
he of course is not egoistic nor egocentric
no no, he is not like the other poets and artists,
he is different
he avoids them, most of them
they are only into themselves
when he is with people he seldom talks
he talks only of big subjects
philosophy, vaccines, death
and other depressing subjects
he interests his listeners
but gets bored quickly from his own subject
and changes to the next one
what's going to happen to him, seriously,

he asks himself, what can his life interest you
and really what do you care
and really it doesn't seem to, for the moment
who is this man I know and don't know
who is me but I am not him
who is this man
I criticize so much
this question is called positive schizophrenia.

He was a vegan for six months,
didn't really work out,
a vegetarian six years,
now he sometimes eats meat
the doctors proposed he have an operation
for his ears
he thinks doctors are priests,
medicine has become a dogma
they create feelings of guilt,
they cause the illnesses,
they create dependence
they left the angel of death unemployed,
their churches are full of expensive
and frightening machines
he talks a lot about medicine
once he talked a lot about Judaism
with him it is neurotic, the neuroses stay
the subject changes
he is egocentric but less than the average poet
which doesn't say anything
because the egocentricity of poets
is of leviathan proportions
he likes coffee, whole rice, and organic carrots
yes, he eats organic foods

yuppie without money
listens allot to Bach
and Schubert Beethoven Satie and others
for example now while writing he is listening
to Bach
not so long ago he was caught
by classical music
his neighbor Birman also listens
to classical music
they exchange cd's between them
but they have nothing to talk about, yes really
this long poem is starting to resemble
Ashberry's "self portrait in a convex mirror"
that was not the intention,
or maybe there is no resemblance at all
I read it a thousand years ago
he is very cultivated, can talk about any literature
and say interesting things,
he reads allot of poetry
or at least did, read thousands of books
in the four languages he knows
English French Spanish Hebrew
honestly he would stop
in the middle of this poem
take a plane and fly abroad
always dreaming of flights and journeys
dreams and accomplishes, in the last two years
he flew five times, to London and Paris.
He put his daughter to sleep to be able to write
he guards the children, he's had enough of it
would like to find a job
that keeps him away from home
for 20 hours a day

but he is lazy, he needs space
many sleeping hours
the son now asks "what are you writing?"
"I am writing a poem"
"what is a poem?"
and the irritating kid
with chewing-gum in his ears
he proposes to them that they play in their room
and let him write
"where?" really, where
how can you write a poem
in the middle of a family
really how, what does it matter
househusband half a week
I want out
now they climb the desk
both of them, that's enough
the kid got hurt, he cries
and this is no way to write,
he tries to raise his children healthy
granola kids, but the big one already got it
he wants chocolate, chewing-gums,
and everything with sugar
once a day he thinks of moving to another town
of leaving everything, in nature
this is also stupid bourgeoisie
he has a theory
about the strength of imagination
that can be resumed in one sentence
imagination is an industry
that produces reality all the time
he is convinced, like any other theory holder,
that reality proves it

the day after tomorrow he will give a lecture
on vaccinations
he didn't vaccinate his daughter,
but he did vaccinate his son
he didn't know at the time about the corruption,
and the lies behind vaccinations
he can't accuse himself all the time,
he will extinguish himself
but that's what he does
he has a strong Pluto he changes all the time
every time he questions everything
and starts again
this poem is probably a new start
he has changed his ars poetica
a thousand times
now he is thinking about printing this poem
in a hundred copies by himself,
he's had enough of sending to publishers
to literary prizes and foundations without guts
but tomorrow or the day after
he won't be able to read this
it will bore him, like most of what he wrote
he runs all the time, runs with no end
his head explodes from races, always forward
his wife is Leo with ascendant Leo
quite dominant in his eyes, but all women are
was a virgin when he got married,
impotent before that
impotent in his head
was in psychological treatment,
and it solved the problems
he never had intercourse
with any woman but his wife

it is a bit out of date, or maybe
a new avant-garde
for a long time he put the tefilinn every morning
then he stopped, this week he bought new ones
when he treats a patient he puts them and prays
so he won't forget there is no doctor but God
God is the doctor and the others
are his emissaries,
monotheist, but likes stereo
today is the fifth year of his father's death
he had a very nonexistent relationship with him
toward his death they started talking a bit
maybe now that he has a son
things could be different, they could talk
his father was a vegetarian at eighteen
and a communist
and the first one not to fast
on Yom Kippur in his town
he used to listen to the Russian radio,
but he was never a communist
a socialist maybe for six months,
he is for a free market
he was ounce in a demonstration of Peace Now.
Now he can't stand them
but it is maybe a common feeling
for Peace Now people they
can't stand anyone, nor themselves
but this is not engaged poetry,
so let's change the subject
a movement of Ashkenazim,
he gets along better with Sephardim
also with French Jews and gentiles
once a neighbor, a Goy from Australia,

who came to study Torah and Hassidism,
said to him-
"the Ashkenazim have a problem,
they are either religious or secular
the Sephardim don't have this problem,
but they will,
they become Ashkenazim in the middle east
he knows very well that the moment
he starts talking
about Morocco
about the cookies of aunt Sultana
or about couscous
there is a good chance that the poem
will be published
the Ashkenazim want action
they want tamed Sephardim full of longings
to the couscous, to the transit camp
but not Sephardim who will write
philosophical poems
no no no, we won't agree to this,
it is our territory,
what the hell
do they think, they should sit in the corner
we will choose a representative Moroccan poet
or writer that will be mediocre enough
not to put us in danger
or maybe he develops such a point of view
to feel Jew, persecuted, diasporical,
someone has to persecute him
everyone can make it here,
everyone can publish
if he has the right connections
the right group, like anywhere else

a Sephardi has chances to publish
if he is mediocre or worse
even if you are Ashkenazi it is not easy.
(you've had enough of this, haven't you?)
There are people who keep a low level
of literature
it is their main job
he really questions himself, really asks himself,
what's the use of all these words,
for what, for whom
not only you ask yourself
he really doesn't know why he writes
he doesn't think it is important or significant
he wants to be famous but is afraid of fame
he doesn't want to expose himself but he does
come on, really, what's going to happen to him,
he doesn't compromise at all
walks in the room, looks at the mirror
doesn't see himself, bald, glasses,
thinning hair, beard,
someone who missed the year,
comes from May '68
or from the October revolution,
or from the next revolution
he often changes his mind
but he has a strong base of ideas
you can't say he is unstable
he aims for the truth with all his heart
accepts the Torah but hates rabbis
the Torah is for him the only divine law
the children have brought down
all the books now
the house is a mess,

his wife will make a scene
when she comes back
he hates her scenes and faces
it reminds him of his mother
he cannot stand criticism but he is very critical
he swallows a lot of vitamin C
magnesium and plants
he passed his exams on naturopathy,
he succeeded,
couldn't believe it
he is afraid and he hates examinations,
in a pathological way
he doesn't have a driving license,
he sleeps allot, ten hours a day
like La Fontaine, always mentions him,
the sleeping genius
he is always looking for pens,
a poet out of his time
who doesn't find himself, who was knowledge
who knew but forgot, who was in Har Sinai
and forgot
that forgot and forgot until he forgot
that he forgot
wandered like the Jewish people
almost everywhere
and now can't find his place
even in his own country
and his feet are worn but his shoes are new,
his clothes clean
like he bought them yesterday, he wandered
in all the countries and his tunic isn't worn out,
and now he doesn't know Hebrew
but it is his upper tongue

with his lower tongue
he speaks three more languages
he doesn't know Hebrew
but knows it better than any other language
he studied English and Latin-American literature,
physics and mathematics, computers
natural medicine, and other stuff
he can't remember,
works as an accountant clerk,
was a cashier, bell boy, translator, librarian
in the national library,
was the manager of the Agnon house,
two months and they fired him,
made a mess
always making a mess everywhere,
now he has settled a bit
but only to make a bigger mess
now he has to feed a family
to go out of the house and chase the beast
he was a journalist for six months
wrote about pop music, worked two weeks
in the plaza hotel
he couldn't wake up in the morning,
six months in the Hilton
now an accountant
for the binational science foundation
and also treats one patient per week
he doesn't have the time to write prose,
that's why
he writes poetry
it asks for high concentration in a short time
prose asks for medium concentration
for a long time

he decided that he'd only write prose if
he is paid for it
at least a small advance,
he likes to think of himself
as a poet who will be discovered after his death,
but that won't happen either
he will be famous long before that,
he works on it with his imagination
and now it is just a matter of time,
a bit of luck, the right place, good relations
and money
but fame is not important
it is important to live well
yes fame is important to him, very important
he has to check all the time if others love him
when they do, he doesn't believe it,
he doesn't believe he will ever be loved
or that it is possible to love him
his head turns in all directions
and he doesn't have time for public relations,
and especially he doesn't have the strength,
he went a few time to the literary cafes,
and spoke to all the editors
in every literary review he was published once
they gave him a chance but he was
not consistent in his attempt to publish,
and the editors weren't consistent
in their will to publish him, all this has to change
all the foundations rejected him,
never won a prize
except for the Amos Foundation
that once gave him a hundred dollars
and with it he published *The Suicide Of God*

a book not understood,
so what, he is happy about that
and that it won't be understood so quickly,

it will take time
he has time, everyday he has more time
and more patience
but the frustration accumulates
if it didn't he wouldn't have written this poem
if he was famous he wouldn't have written
this poem
everything has a sense and a direction
and every thing has its time
now he waits, it will come, tomorrow it will come
it will come
at its time.

HORSES AND OTHER DOUBTS

Horses

And
they will come running
galloping galloping
gray black blue horses
forgotten horses
horses from all the centuries
will come
to crush everything they see
women men and children
and donkeys and foxes and dogs and cats
Come they will Come
horses and more horses
and nobody will be able to stop them
not atomic bombs
nor gases nor chemicals nor viruses
they will be the strongest horses that ever existed
horses that recall all
the injustices made and to be made
and the man will ask
Why in my time
Why in my house
Why my family and my children
and nobody will be able to answer
the blue horses, the celestial horses
those will be the worst
destroying 200 story buildings
destroying tanks and planes
blowing them apart
and the president will calm
and the specialists will analyze

and the televisions will speak
but nothing will help
more and more horses will come
out of nowhere
horses appearing suddenly
in front of people walking on the streets
and you, in bed, you'll look at me
despaired, waiting for rescue
I will look at you and suddenly
I will become
a red horse.

We Count Our Dead

When we go to sleep
we count our dead
When we wake up
we count our dead
When we end the century
we count our dead
When we kill
we count our dead
When we live
we count our dead
When we eat
we count our dead
When we pray
we count our dead
When we celebrate life
we count our dead
When we write a poem
we count our dead.

Ars poetica

Because writing poetry is admitting
our errors
Because poetry is history
exiled from the History books
Because poetry is the bomb of the poor
Because poetry is the language of the dead
Because poetry is escape from ourselves
Because poetry is looking at the face of our mistakes
and our ancestors' mistakes
Because poetry is the first day of the universe

I dare to say this:

I am tired of poets, poems and poetry

I am tired of myself and my double
my light and my shade

For I know that

When I say the word truth I am already lying

and my bed is made of burning stones.

Self definition

You ask me to define myself
but I have no borders
I am a one man walking country
some days I am an Arab
others I am a Jew
others a European
and my mind wanders
when you see me in Paris
I may be in Morocco
When you see me in Jerusalem
I may be in Spain
Some days I am Goliath
others I am David
Some days I write with a pen
others I use the computer
When you ask me who I am
I feel you are shooting at me:
Sometimes the poem is my home
sometimes the poem is my exile.

Buildings

It may be wealth, it may be poverty after it,
maybe the hundred years old buildings
haunted by shadows of dying people
by screams of pain
it may be the weather and the cold air
the long winters
it may be all these together;
people here become more
cold and more mean from day to day
without paying attention, step by step
they gave up on smiling, on laughing
on the word happiness
negative feelings fill them
as an aura around their bodies.
In this city the sun
won't shine anymore.

Buildings and people

It seems that the beautiful buildings
describe better than anything
this city
they are full of black soot
sometimes they are cleaned
and they are beautiful again
just like they used to be
but a few months later
they are full of soot again.

The death of a city

You can see everything is dying here
because poetry is dead
you can see everything is dying here
when you read the language
there is not one word, not one sentence
that doesn't pretend to mean something else
and that something else
is related to something else that someone said
and the sentences become longer and longer
never ending, even the poetry
is written in prose.
And there is not one person
who can say
one clear sentence
you can see everything is dying
because the language is dead.

Stores that tell stories

Hundred years old stores close down
thirty years old people
look like their elders
and it seems
no one pays attention to what is happening.
only the tourists are still impressed.
The skies lower.
And everything outside shines
the new cars, the expensive clothes, the made-up
faces
while everything inside is rotten.

The world

the world is becoming
more and more
like
a family discussing to death
the heritage of a few houses
while outside
there is
an earthquake.

Gold bars

Who are these rich people
these desperate people
Why do they do look so ill
making others believe their money is better
Who are these sad people
Always expected to look great
never become old
never be ill
always be happy
in what kind of prisons
do these rich people live?

Rough times

whatever we do this is incredible
the rough times were better
when we moved alone along those labyrinths
times were lonelier than thought
the Thames looked better than the Seine,
Look at me she said holding my hand
as if to die
look at me
the weather is crazy but so are we
this rain will last forever
but we won't
this world will last forever
but our body our beautiful body deteriorating
as a God falling from the skies
look at me I said
lines of poetry as lines of your face
they get smarter as they get uglier.

Don't let them

They tell you that you are crazy that
you have no culture
that you have no past
they tell you
you are fantasizing
that the past you are talking about
is idealization
they are afraid of you
afraid you might take their grants
and their prizes and their jobs at the universities
they are afraid they might have to learn something
new
they are afraid you are better than they are
you have their culture and in top of it
you have your culture
you can see them but they can't see you
the only problem is they have the jobs
and the money

The road

the road gets longer
as the city of our dreams
gets closer.

Two Camps

there were those
who beat

and there were
those

who stayed silent.

Poets

So many were lost through the journey
their tongues dried, their eyes shuttered
their words silenced.
Some became famous
others stopped writing.

Genome

The president of the United States announcing the greatest scientific discovery of men reminded me of Kelvin in 1897 telling his fellow scientists that science has discovered everything, now the biggest liars in the world, pharmaceutical firms that have bought all the politicians and physicians and researchers in the world, are telling us that 3 years from now we'll have genetic drugs my GOD, look at all the damage they did with chemistry

with atomic science, with all the technology, my GOD

do you have to give them genes in their hands, what will happen in a few years for every people they will save (and they will as they did) ten will be born with hands on their hearts, vaginas on their shoulders, two hearts below their kidneys and new things we don't even know about and they will sell this to us for all our money, medical funding

has no limits in the name of saving lives, but, remember

this, there is a long physicians' strike now in Israel and

as it has happened in every long strike of physicians in Israel, the UK and Mexico the death rate has fallen by half, so is it scientific now to say that they kill three persons for each one they save.

Japanese

I don't understand the Japanese
with their cameras, with their
never ending smiles, today,
a snowy day in Jerusalem, I don't
understand the Japanese I don't
understand either why this Japanese
subject came into my mind
in the middle of this snowy day
while listening to an Irish singer
who records for a Japanese label
that's the way it goes, no one
understand the Japanese but everyone
wants their money, and if we are on
the subject, I don't understand the Sudanese
the Palestinians the Germans the Danish
the French the English the Dutch
the Saoudians, the Egyptians the Canadians
and more than all of them together
I don't understand
the Jews.

Land of lunatics

If these hands that caress my daughter
could caress the past
If this mouth that kisses my wife
could kiss Fatima
for one last time
when she came back from Belgium
to visit us
and brought chocolates
If these legs
could walk through time
and drink again and
again
that last cup of coffee with milk.

lately
all I do
is
smoke cigarillos
and listen to
early
Serrat
songs

crying

asking myself
what the hell did I do
in my previous lives
to have landed
in this land of lunatics.

Disappearances

While explaining
very important things to you
suddenly you used
to disappear
and I
used to go on talking
explaining
for streets
until finally realizing
I was speaking
to myself
explaining
inexplicable things
and thinking

what would people think
of me
so young
and already speaking to himself
on the streets.

You disappeared often.
Everyone was looking for you
always

until one day you left the country
and escaped from everybody
there nobody knows you
and no one looks for you
trying
to continue from the last sentence
so you can understand
the first.

Pacifist tanks

Carmela

These tanks are becoming
pacifists
and they want to convince me
that it is better to go with them
and lose all I have
than any good war
they say what's the use, they tell me
what the hell
they say that everything is relative
post modern
that there is no reason
to react in such a way,

Carmela

I will erase these guys
with rubbers
and scare the hell out of them
with water guns
with brooms
with disguises
until they show me the
the way to the
No.

Nobody

nobody loves the French
not even the French
and in the rue tilsit there are no more whores
Paris darkens from day to day
from year to year
and like an experienced old juggler
she tries to keep showing her beauty
from days of yore
without success.

Old Paris

Paris is an old woman
with a wrinkled face
and menstruation is
a memory to her
the only living creatures in her
are the gypsies in the metro
asking for a franc or two
saying they are homeless
and wasting them in machines
for candies and chocolates.

The people of this city

The people of this city
are flowers behind bars

they don't know
that behind their backs
there are no walls

the people of this city
Jews Moslems and Christians
carry the burden of history upon their shoulders

the people of this city
haven't heard the news
Pharaoh is dead

the people of this city are convinced
that life is death

the people of this city are condemned
to a death sentence:
 Thou shalt live.

Giving UP

So many times I said
I couldn't take it
but I took it
The dirty dishes, the screams,
your silences, my tensions,
my always being right, so many
times I could have left if you just said so, so
many times you could have left if I said it.
Our departures never met, and I wonder was it
out of fear, or just the belief that there'll be better
days
like these, sunny days of calm, wonderful days when
our bodies meet and become one, these are few
but aren't miracles rare?

So many times I wanted to give up
and I gave up.
Each time I did, something filled the hole
something new and unexpected, giving up
is believing in miracles.

Dirty white flag

We lost
and there wasn't even a fight, we
were defeated and there was
no war, we are prisoners in our homes
and the bars are our own hands, we were
squeezed by tanks that we couldn't see, we were
conquered and didn't even meet our enemy
our tongues have disappeared and our children
speak to us in foreign languages, we are aliens where
we were the owners of the sheep, the cows and the
horses,
our sentences grow longer and longer trying to
explain how all this happened
until we are left with one word we never heard we
never saw
one word we don't know how to pronounce we can't
see the letters
only the thought of it bring tears to our eyes pain to
our kidneys
strokes to our hearts, and our children they are just
waiting to get their shares
of our death and out across the corner an old woman
naked is crying her fate
a young man is masturbating with his giant penis.

The serene face of death

There is this incredible smell of death in their rooms
the smell of rotten bodies
cells trying to live in this killing world
it's the smell of all the pollution of all the drugs
the bad food the bad water that we're drinking
and all our thoughts of jealousy and greediness
and out of all this mess, all the family
waiting for this man or woman to die
and killing him or her in their way with their fears
out of all this mess, a few days before death you
see suddenly this calm face coming out of nowhere
this serene face of death, this incredibly beautiful
look
in their faces like you've never seen before
and you are puzzled to death, what the hell does
this serene face of death means?

The evening before

My father after his father's death, growing a beard
I was 6 years old, now coming of age and realizing
that I was in a house full of death, my grandmother
died
when I was three or four, and we all lived in a same
big apartment
Death was part of my growing up, my brother being
ill
since I was 7, and he died when I was thirteen
and in many ways we were happy he died, but felt
guilty
for not being with him in his last hours, then
becoming religious
extremist, exaggerated trying to understand where
death comes from
what is the color of this angel, the shape of his shoes
does he run, or is death just the moment when the
angel of life
tires of us, and goes for another soul, and the first
time I was
near a dead man, it was my father's corpse, covered
by his blanket
dead on his bed, may I die that way, that's what I
wish for
going to sleep at home in my bed and not waking up,
and in
front of the corpse I didn't uncover or kiss, I tried to
kiss my mother
but she pushed me away, I was guilty again of not
being there, but

this time I had come the evening before with some
cakes, croissants,
my wife. And we sat all four of us around the table,
talking, laughing,
skipping the subjects that made us fight, we were so
close to death
and we didn't know, what could we say if we did,
that we were just
hours away from the most important encounter in life
for those who leave
as well as for those who go on living wondering how
that moment will be.

A drunken pilot

I have traveled your body
like a drunken pilot
360 degrees of warmth and cold
thousands of miles within your skins
sometimes the whisky was good
at times the beer was awful
the malt melted between mountains
snow followed the sun everywhere
my eyes were fixed
on one degree I cannot locate
one look in your eyes one sight of you
from an angle I have never palpated,
stick to me, it is late for sorrow or
understanding, flight is the answer.

On the bus to Tel Aviv

The winter is hot
and the cars look like
mutilated bodies
the south American travesty
behind me is talking
in Spanish
about her first husband.

Setting the rules

Me and my lover we play
but we don't know what the game is
is it a game of reconciliation
or a game of evaporation

I and Lover we play
but every step
changes the rules
of the game
until we don't know
whether it's a game
or life

I and lover
we game
until life is
nothing but
a play.

Earthquake

Bodies into the land they go
no ceremonies in the middle
the land eats flesh
the sea takes its toll
buildings seen as monsters
become flies
children and elders
strong and weak
they're all the same
buried alive
under mother earth angry
mother angry father wind
angry son angry god sea
equality is found in death
under the earthquake
It's Izmir it's Agadir Tokyo
it's a memory you can't explain
to your children how
everything was here and a moment
later gone how you ask yourself
you know there is no answer
but the question will be there
as long as you live.

Prophetic poetic

Four years after the war is forgotten
and the people become part of a history book
four young lads in Denver
will start a band named
The Kossovo Survivors
They will be marketed as the Denver scene
play alt-country-rock
and sell 25 million cd's
in their 4 years existence,
then the lead singer and guitarist
known by the name of John Kossovarvich
will hang himself
because his girlfriend
died in a car crash.

Total eclipse

Sometimes she is a memory
sometimes a line of a poem
met her in a total eclipse
thousands years ago
left her when the sun left the moon
her dark-skinned breast
and her deep big eyes
her Djerbian beauty
her Parisian sensuality
she's in Paris now if you see her
she has forgotten me
well into her marriage
her travel agency work
but I touched her breasts
when I couldn't penetrate her
her breasts when they were young
before they did mother
I knew them before her husband did
if you see her she may say
she doesn't remember
if you asked me any day
I would have said a surprised who
but now she's lines of poetry
breasts of metaphors
eyes lighting my letters
like poetry forever
she is the love that never was.

Babel

Seems like a thousand years ago
we met and had the same discussions
somewhere in Spain
These discords seem to endure forever
seem to have been born with us
look like they'll never die
Even if the world is destroyed
even then our words will go
on discussing themselves
words without the need of voices
words without people fighting forever.

How small is the universe

Today the universe is very small
I can hold it in my hand
caress it if I want
destroy it if I want
play with the stars
like a juggler
play with the planets
with humankind
with aliens
instead
I keep watching amazed
at how small the universe can be
in my mind.

Italian tableau

beautiful Italian songs
sung by old fat women
in family restaurants
where you can't eat
without having your stomach
go upside down
from the screams of the father
and the deeds of the son
eating those tasty spaghetti napolitana
and the pizzas without meat
drinking the cheap good red wine
amazed at the family at the end of the room
not noticing you and you only
noticing them.

For a new old testament economy

every
50 years you should send your slave free
free the people
every fifty years
free them from their debts
free them from their
mistakes
from their parent's mistakes
free them from their mortgages
instead of seeing the stock market
collapse every 50 years
free people from their greediness
free them from the banks
and from their interests
free them from the stock market
and from their shares
free the oppressor and the oppressed
every fifty years
free the slave in you
and you will free thyself.

Let the world begin
every 50 years.

Faces

I have seen you in so many faces
loving face, caring face, caressing face
angry face, frivolous face,
aging face, not-accepting the facts face,
facing face, avoiding face, sexy face

resentful face, escaping face, disdaining face
approving face, guilt face, accusing face,
indulgent face, deadline face,
screaming face.

I have seen you in so many faces
each face making a bigger mystery
of your
changing face
I don't know whose face you are
but I remember
that face from our primeval days:
face
looking at me.

The voyage

and there is a light
you know there is light
that will lead you
all the way to the cave
where a bottle of old wine
is awaiting you
since the falling of Lucena
800 years you know it is
waiting for you like
a candle that never reaches the end
you know it is awaiting you
now if you had the guts
to take the baton
and start the voyage.

Mother Death

Here they come all colors your choice
here they come you can choose your death
we have viruses car accidents cancers aids
we have good marketed deaths we have rare death
how about old-fashioned death like tuberculosis
soon we will bring back the plague
while we find a new potent virus
that kill in a few hours
we are developing them in our laboratories
we have retro-death or sci-fi death
and you can now die in your bed
the hospitals are full
no matter how many we open
we have patients twice the beds.
this is not Mr. death anymore
this is mother-death.

Mount Scopus Campus

Every 2 or 3 years I go there
to hear a lecture never to read my poems
and swear I will never go back
then I forget and find myself there
after a few hours closing into myself
then feeling completely depressed
unable to communicate with anyone
and feeling that I should be in
a psychiatrist hospital, how can people
go there every day, this is modern
architecture at its worst, the ceiling
is closing on your head, you can never
go back through the way you came
halls and corridors like labyrinths
taken from a Borges or a Kafka text
the beautiful Jerusalem sun never gets in
you know it's out there but the light is dim
unnatural
and people looking tired, so tired.

It was 1981, and it was the new campus
I had finished my first year of English literature
and although I had some minor problems
like writing a poem as a paper on
Delmore Schwartz's short story
In Dreams Begin Responsibilities
or discussing the monosyllabic words
in And Death Shall Have No Dominion
I still was going to get into the second year
I had already paid the registration fee

and then the first day in Mount Scopus
looking for the classroom and asking and not
finding it and getting a big headache
until I said
I wont study here, I just wont
and that's the way my university days ended.

Now, when I tell this to other people
they say yes, it's one of the worst
and most awful building in this country
but no one has the reaction I have
or had yesterday theorizing that
I was killed there in a previous life,
see, I am going crazy and now that I've
written it I am not going back
never going back again.

Witches

The witches look lovely tonight
they are all dressed for the wedding
of Lilith and Prince Charles
Their noses are perfect
and they walk to applaud
the love they always had
The witches they have names
that burn the water that tighten
their belly to the next oven
and we all know the witches love you
they love kings and princes
they love poets and slaves
they love everything
for they are witches
and their loves are ashes.

Slopes

I am wearing this uniform but I don't care for wars
I am wearing this uniform to beat you and prostitute
you
to unchain your heart out of your flooded hat
to destroy all that we built with our own horse

I am going now to Bethlehem to build me a boat
I will then fly through caves of death and fire
and when I see you again I reckon you won't
even think about looking at my shining face

My face will become gold and fire out
of my nose will arise the words you say
and just when you think you understand

What I am saying your tongue will be dryer
than the desert, and your words will invade
your ears, do you hear my slopes now?

Finally I thank my parents

Everything I ever learned
came from my parents' mistakes
the solutions of one generation
are the problems of the next

Whatever they did to help me
was against my nature
Swimming against the waves
I learned where my future was

I shouted and cried until I silenced
and there I could see my angels
helping me to get through

It happened in dreams where
funny films were screened before me
waking me up, my laughs from nowhere.

Ready

Used to say I am ready to die
but I was a coward
I was not ready to live

second hand lives
lives of few seconds

Used to say I was ready to die
now I am willing to live
to die anyday now
ready to live ready to leave.

Crocodile

Mama I want a crocodile
I have been sweating all night long
I know they are coming to get me
and mama I need a crocodile
the horses are tired the lizards sleeping
the cats are eating lions
the dogs are barking to the dead moon
and I want my crocodile mama
I need it to fight my enemies
no, mama, a pistol wont do,
no, I don't need a Uzi, no
not even a tank will do
I want a crocodile I want to see my crocodile
eating my enemies, eating every limb
eating their flesh and their tongues

Mama Open that door....

Missing in action

I'd rather miss you
than be with you.
reality has divorced itself
from the dream
and they keep
distancing themselves
as a ship from the harbor
but since scientists have proved
the earth is round the question is
will they meet again
when and where.

In memoriam of Townes Van Zandt

your winter came early
now the world is more orphan
especially for those who never heard of you.

Foolish bird

Many lives ago and many lines ago
there was this small bird
calling my name inside my ears
and waiting for my answer
and I gave him answers
and each time he said no
this is not the answer
and I said yes it is
but after 2 days I understood
he was right.
now the bird is dead
I don't have the answer
and I don't have nobody
telling me I am fooling myself.

The Yoreh

Yoreh in Hebrew means 'First Rain'.

Everything will happen in October
After the Yoreh
it's a new year

Everything will happen in October
I'll win a contest
my poems will be so good
women will faint

in October

after the first rain
my wife will love me
and my children will be beautiful
in October drops of rain
will become gold
in my hands

everything will happen in October
I'll win the lottery
there'll be no more pollution
we will discover that the twentieth century
was all a dream
and we will be able to see the light of the sun
in October
the light will be bright.

The cruelest month

No one knows which is
the cruelest month anymore
all months are becoming dinosaurs
of flood heat freeze and fires
No one knows if the winter
will ever come and if it does
Will it be only rain or floods
No one knows what to pray for
rains that don't stop
or some drops to clean the air,
and next summer
will the heat kill us
or will it snow.

Running away in circles

Hey hey man where are you running?

It's the end of the world.

Then, why are you running?

I want to see the end of the world.

But... if it's the end of the world it should be everywhere.

I am running away from the end of the world.

But... if the world ends you can't run away from it.

Can you stop asking questions please, I am running.

Because maybe that's the reason for the end of the world.

Migrating

I am bird who's lost his Africa
I am a bird who's lost his summer
I am a bird who's lost his voice
I am a bird who's lost his language
I am a bird who's lost his direction
I am a bird who's lost his legs
I am a bird who's lost his smile
I am a bird who's lost his tribe
I am a bird who's lost his family
I am a bird who's lost his nest
I am a bird who's lost his joy

but one day
I will fly
again.

Zionism

You asked me to forget
my hometown
you wanted me to forget
my neighbor
you asked me to forget
my name
you forced me
to forget my Morocco
you wanted me to forget
my ancestors
you asked me to forget
my Spain

you made me
a master forgetter

Till I forgot you
and remembered all this.

The Hamass terrosist

after Wysalva Czymborska "The
Terrorist, He watches" and dedicated to Asaf and
Meital and to all the victims who lost legs, lives and
futures.

1.
In a few moments he will blow himself
he is young, he has no children
he has no wife, in a moment
nothing will be left of him.
No one will know who he was
he left home years ago
and disappeared
forever.
I am sitting very close
drinking an espresso
and smoking a cigarillo
my friend asks me to come with him
to the place of the bomb
I tell him I am tired
which is not true
and that I will wait for him.
he doesn't know and I don't know
that in a few minutes
the terrorist will explode
the hope for peace will explode
and that Meital's leg will explode
and her brother Asaf will go to heaven.
Meital's husband, a Doctor

will hear the bomb and run to help the wounded
not knowing that his wife and her brother are there.
I am savoring the espresso
It is a sunny day in Tel Aviv
and after this bomb
nothing will be the same again for months
people will be afraid to come back here
Dizengof street will be deserted.
No one can stop him now
it is too late
he will die for Allah
and for being young, virgin
and indoctrinated.
Even if I go there I can't stop him.
My friend disappears.

2.

Suddenly there is a boom
and then there is silence
15 seconds of silence
like the moment before God created the world
or it is like the silence before
being born
It is a screaming silence
that can cut the air,
then there are police cars
stopping the silence
first comes a Peugeot 205
one, two, three,
fifteen of them,
then the ambulance comes
then people come from the place

they have to tell the story
they speak to everybody and to themselves
a mother doesn't know what happened to her
daughter
people are making phone calls
with telephones and mobiles
very soon the whole system collapses
this is the center of Israel
Dizengof center in Purim
everybody is here or could be here.

I sit,
hear what happened
don't know what happened to my friend
(he reappeared 5 hours later)
I am left speechless
for half an hour
I stand
try to talk to the waitress
I can't make a sound
I go back to my seat
drink the water left.

3.

I think of the whole day
then I am really afraid.
How I skipped the place of the bomb
a place where I always go or pass through
I took many side streets
and my friend didn't understand why
he just followed me

I wanted all the time to go back to Jerusalem
"Half hour in front of the sea
That's enough for me"
I said
but he wanted the coffee
"let's drink it here
in Sheinkin
and then go back"
but he insisted
he wanted to drink it in Frishman,
and so on for the whole day.
He has promised not to insist again
and just follow me.

4.

My religious friend said it is a sign
but a sign of what
of being right or being wrong.
What kind of smoky shadowy cloudy
world
is this
that when there is a sign
we can't decipher it.

Elohim

"And you will be Elohim, You are all sons of Eloha."
Bible.

"Elohim creates worlds and destroy worlds."
The Talmud

Only 5 minutes away
from the complete destruction
of this world
and all in the hands of man
and then you will be Elohim
and no one to remember you

but you are thousands of years away
from creating a world
where there is a place for every man,
as far as man was
when Cain killed Abel,
As far
and as close
if you are Elohim.

Traces

traces and traces and traces
everywhere I walk
I leave something behind me
and receive something
from the traces other left behind
and from the soil
stop a minute to see
who was here
who will be here
who lived here
who was buried here
and who will be buried
who will be born and who will die
on the place where I walk
and the road becomes more interesting
more lengthy, more
impossible.

Moroccan

I always had the feeling
that the reasons for which
I was published in Israeli magazines
were extraneous
they needed a Moroccan
a sefardi
to see themselves as
liberals
but they never understood anything
of what I was saying
convinced that if I am speaking about Morocco
I am not speaking about the world.

Brother of the roads

1.

Please stop the car
You travel too fast
Please brother
I think we're lost
Are you sure this is the right way
You travel too fast
And you don't listen to me
Listen listen brother
to the dance of the dew
Listen to the trees
haunted
Brother
You are deaf
Now I realize you are deaf

I wake up in the morning
an head for an unfamiliar road
impenetrable
I go to sleep at night
And I don't recognize
my bed
I don't identify the woman
sleeping next to me

Brother
Please take me home
it's cold out here
I want to see mother

and caress her
before the night comes down

I want to return home
and this is not the road

And you tell me:

We have Already returned
And this is the house
We have Already returned
and there is no house
We are lost in the forest
and this forest is our home

Mother is sleeping
And you should not wake her up.

Brother brother
you know you are lying
but what you say
is the only truth.

2.

The house, brother,
is at the end of the Mediterranean

But where is the end
of the Mediterranean

The sea is circular
and closed

The house is everywhere
and nowhere

Brother
I was always afraid to drive
Because I knew
no car could take me
to my goal
I let you drive
and my goal is now the road
and the road
becomes longer everyday
There are those who say
that the road is created
by walking
but I am afraid,
I prefer not to move,
I am afraid

of the lion.

The poem

First there is a sound
a familiar and distant
sound
coming from the twelfth century
in Granada or Lucena

then

less than a

second

later

there is a rhythm
like a lonely drum
in a high mountain
played by the leaves and the branches
sometimes subtle
sometimes noisy and unbearable

then there are the words
a line or sometimes two

when written the
words start flowing
as if they were waiting for
the door to be opened

sometimes

it is just one poem
mostly
there are hundreds
waiting for me
to write them
no matter how hard
I tell them
there are not many
readers left
to read them
they all want to be written
screaming at me
convincing me
asking and begging
but I have to make the choice
which ones to write
which ones to leave.

Upon hearing that Mahmoud Darwish was ill

and I hear that you are in a hospital near Paris
and I hear that you are very ill
and I feel my hair chilling
and I say no I can't write a poem about Darwish
he is my enemy
but I know He is not my enemy
I am just afraid of what the others will say
It's one thing to say that
Darwish is the best Israeli poet
just to see their half smiles
saying that I am crazy
and another to write about you
and I have loved you poems
you, like me,
an exiled in the world
when the world is all exile
when the words are all aliens
and I loved when you said in an interview
that
had you known your poems would be translated
to so many European languages
you would have written them differently
with less symbolism an clearer
I loved you when you said that a poet has to

write his poems clear
I loved when you wrote about Al Andalus
and making love in the afternoon.
May god be with you, Mahmoud,
my friend not my enemy
my fighter with words
stronger than weapons
may Allah be your healer
may you live many years to come
and may you rest when the time has come
in the gardens of Eden.

Not poem

not to try to write a poem
not literature
not to try to succeed
a poem
to write the words
as they come
to tell the story
to forget
all the history of
literature
the moment you hold
the pen.

The bourgeoisie

In his last years even
old Buk
wrote about the bourgeoisie
he hated all his life.
But he taught the bourgeois
how to write
about it.
He faced literature
as if it was a horse race
in every poem he bet on a different horse
sometimes he won, sometimes he lost
but he always took chances.

The man of long winters

to Klaus Gerken

the man of long winters
writes me emails
understands my poetry
better that the Israelis near me
writes like we've been twenty years together
and always influenced one another
he writes about Yoric,
the cousin of Henry,
who doesn't want to work
but is a barber twenty years.
being a barber, like being an accountant
is not a job for a poet.
There is no job that fits a poet.

The dangers of the poet

I can see his talent
and that's quite a lot
but he is like a spoiled child
from early age his poems
are esteemed
published in important magazines
and publishing houses
and he is afraid to lose his position
not yet thirty and already afraid to take risks
twenty years from now he may understand
that a few rejections could have made him
a stronger poet, a better poet
or he may become a university favorite,
another kind of death.

so many dangers stand
in a poet's road
and fame is not
the smaller of them.

Need

Please
Tell me that I am right
please tell me
that I am not dreaming
that the mountains I see
are not uncanny
that the memories
are not inventions
tell me that all this
never ending trip
has some meaning
Please
even if it is lie
tell me that my native home
is still in the same street
tell me that nobody has knocked it down
please convince me
I am not an elephant
and that my memory makes sense.
Please
I have to hear these words
many
many times.

The poets

No longer they censure us
no longer they kill us
no longer they put us in the jail

there's no need

we censure ourselves
we carry the censorship
in our brain

We are not dead
but we live in caves
and nobody sees the light
of the sun

they don't give a damn
they know very well that
no one reads us
that poetry has died
even if the poets are alive.

Yoric in Paris

dedicated to Klaus Gerken

yoric, the cousin of henry,
walks through Paris
and in the boulevard Des Italiens
he sees no Italians
in the champs elysees
he sees no fields
in the poetry books
he doesn't find any poetry
in the literature books
no literature
in the women
he sees no woman
and in the people
he sees shadows.
The difference between now and then
is that he has stopped
looking for anything
in Paris.

Scary Words

Some words scare us
the same one that
could release our fears.

Words, like monsters lying dormant in lakes
waiting for the big day to wake up.

Words, mantras of lost arms
rivers no one can see
prayers our souls most need
shoes to walk with
on the sea.

I read the poems

I buy the books and I don't read them
I says
tomorrow the day after until they
lose all interest better poems
fill my head from books I
don't read just look at the first page
lightening a new poem
but the poetry books, those I read them all
all the poems, the good ones the bad ones
I give them chances and more chances to change
maybe one day. poems, yes poems, are
the fuel of this world, that's why so many are written
that's why we need so many of them.

The Rabbi

Winter Jerusalem chilling cold empty central streets
me and my friend who became a rabbi
reciting poems by Dylan Thomas and shouting
that 'death shall have no dominion' at night
then shouting 'we are rich and famous'
because a poem was published in some obscure
literary magazine where death had its toll
we are almost famous both of us, not really rich
then we never really cared about money anyway
and there is nothing important about being famous
you're never rich enough or famous enough.

Depart

I was here and then gone
a few moments passed
many thoughts
my mind held the universe in it
I was here and then
gone

Some will remember me
others
would rather forget

Some poems will remember I
wrote them
others will go their own way

when all is said and nothing left for the wind
I will walk from the land and scream
my last word to nobody.

To Rumi

It is when I finish the poem
that I ask myself
how will I be able to make sense
of this world until the
next
poem

The only silence I know is the silence
of the written words
pleading to be part of this world
pleading to make it a better place to be.

Noble prize

Ginsberg didn't get it, Buk neither
was a bum
Borges some said was fascist
but Garcia Marquez got it
Did you know
Winston
Churchill got the nobel
of literature, have you read his prose,
Toni Morrison yes but not Amiri Baraka
not Kerouak died too young O.K.
But why not Henry Miller
died too old?
Maybe Ferlinghetti still can get it
Burroughs? too crazy or too american
now we need someone from the east
now we need a jew, an african
in the mean time my favorites writers
all dying not getting nobel prizes,
most of the winners just bore me
Czymborska O.K. though,
then what are my chances,
too crazy yes, but also African,
born Morocco, jew, live in Israel,
write poetry in Hebrew, Spanish some English
like this poem, and if I win I promise
will read this one when they give it to me.

The Vintage book of contemporary American poetry.

November 1990

First Edition.

I bought it at Strand

April 20

Broadway Boulevard

1999, for half the retail price of 14.95\$,

7.48\$. I asked them to mail it to me

with ten more books to Jerusalem.

In it I found a receipt

from Barnes And Noble

from 9/20/94

for 7.48\$+0.62 tax

total 8.10.

I don't Know Which Barnes And Noble,

in Manhattan the

Address is not precised

the phone number is 212-633-3500

The buyer paid in cash 20.10\$

and got 12\$.

The receipt says THANK YOU,

I found it in page 396,

Mark Strand says in that page in
a poem called "The Story Of Our
Lives":

"We are reading the story of our lives
which takes place in a room.
The room looks out on a street.
There is no one there."

I look at the woman who bought this book
in 1994, it was a lovely autumn day,
she was lonely, she was 30 years old back then,
she was a poet, she was a writer,
That day she woke up very happy,
one of her poems was going to be included
in a very important anthology,
she wanted to celebrate it
by buying a book of poetry,
and a bottle of wine, she liked Chilean wine,
the leaves were falling on her window,
she looked out of her window,
but just before she was going to leave
she noted that she was menstruating,
it always happened suddenly to her
her periods weren't dramatic like her friends',
she didn't have many friends,
she lived not far from Barnes And Noble,
she wanted some poetry book
but she really couldn't decide
so she went for the anthology
which had a 50% discount,
a bit of Ginsberg, a bit of Berryman
Ashbery and a poet she never heard of till then
Mark Strand, and

many others.

She sat in the village
the sun was beautiful on her face
making it shine for some real goal
and she drank some coffee
reading the book, she read for hours,
until I woke up seven hours later
in Paris, It was a beautiful sunny day
the leaves were dancing to the wind
and I looked out of my window
and saw her going back home,
she was lovely and she was gone
before I could dream of her
before we bought the same book
before our fingers touched the same paper.

International poet

I international poet I multilingual poet
walk the streets of this world in any language
walk paris walk madrid walk malaga
walk antalia walk istanbul
walk austin walk new york
walk lisboa before reading pessoa
born tetuan close to tangier a.m.
while burroughs ginsberg and corso
writing their best work wondering
if there was any cosmic influence
but bukowski not in tangier
he king of american poets
king of wine king of swine
king of anarchy poets
even five years after his death
they academic know what don't know
still don't put him in their anthologies
great bukowski had them all
they not see his poems are even becoming
better after his death
me international poet I love that
I love to be antiestablishment
once my wife told me I am
the most antiestablishment man
she ever knew and she knew men and artists
international poet born in small city
while forty miles from there
some crazy writers were making
the greatest literary revolution of
20th century

so what is big what is small
tangier or new york city
or tetuan, and who is big
truman or ginsberg or corso or buk
and what hour is it now, now
if you know you are a saint.

Austin NYC April 1999

1.

At Shakespeare and Co.
New York city
poetry rack poetry month
a big sign
The Bukowski books are in the
Drinking smoking and screwing rack
at the front of the store,
there also Burroughs
did he smoke, I think he didn't drink
then Celine
did he screw anything else but
his own life,
then we have old Buk
it's like he drank, smoked, screwed
and then
wrote some poems
and the most important things he did
are that he drank screwed and smoked
and not
that he was the best American poet
see that's the problem with all
dis american cultu'
we want to know who did he
fuck, how many, how much he drank
but much less
we want to read
what he said

2.

Time of suitcases again
end of New York city
Greenwich village
looking desperately
for a place to piss
half the time
getting harder and harder
even once almost did it in my pants
while walking on these same streets
where Ginsberg walked
wondering what would he have said
about Kossovo
when people of truth die
we miss them
when they are alive
we disagree
admiring their truthfulness
had some good food
not lots of music
found some good books
it's time for suit-
cases
again
fear of flying
hate of planes
will remember McDougall street
and Broadway avenue
would rather forget 5th avenue
would remember Austin
its poets and wonderful music

too much too long planes
to come back soon
then again
who knows
as my grandmother said
trips happen when they
happen.

The poet's blood

Oh people I have walked your cities
but you have not listened
You talked to me of
Mercy
I have cried in your streets
And I have shred my clothes apart
I have torn my skin apart
but you have not seen my blood
You were drinking your wine
inside your houses talking
about God, Atheism and Justice
Oh people I have walked your sidewalks
barefoot
till my feet were flesh
till there was no more blood
still you couldn't touch my pain
and my joy
still
you didn't hear my silence.

The old poets

are easily offended.
those who didn't make it
and live from the compliments of their friends
one compliments the other.
the successful ones
are not sure they are good
the poems don't come anymore
no literary award can make them sure
they are good poets anymore,
even the old poems are no solace

Soon they start to fight and scream
the old woman poet cries
she is not receiving enough attention
for her just-published book

I am there asking myself what am I doing there

suddenly I want to be like Mother Theresa
and kiss them all, but they don't now they are poor.
The only judges of poetry are the centuries
and very few make it, not always
those who were known in their lives

I want to shout at them:
If you go into a cave don't complain about the light.

The important poet

Poor man he has started to think he is
an important poet.

And he is so busy being an important poet
he can't read, write or talk to his friends.

When he was unknown it was funny
now it is ridiculous.

When someone he doesn't remember
salutes him in the streets

he thinks it is because he is an important poet.

He went into a bar in Tel Aviv and ate a falafel
and the owner told him it is for free
because it is the first time he comes

He told me this and added:

Do you think it is because I am an important poet?

I just had a good laugh, heavy noisy good laugh.

He looked at me very seriously and said

WHY NOT?

The dead poets

They're the best.
Once their egos are gone
they write their best poems.
The poems in their books
start to change
some appear for the first time
poems you never read.
They are not famous for the
wrong reasons
nor unknown for the same
reasons.
They are only poems.
The best of them have installed
the poetry machine
that makes each of their poems
better every day.

The old bull

I imagine him often
the old bull
sitting in front of his computer
writing one poem after another
5-7-12 poems in one morning
7 more in the evening
and it makes me want to ameliorate myself
to write more poems better poems
he started writing his poems at 37
I started at 15
so I may still win at the end of the race
if my horse holds 35 more years
and I am not destroyed by family life
working as an accountant
signing a contract of six figures
or being in before I am 65
everything
from the strongest tornado
to the smallest falling leave
can and has destroyed poets.

Cream of the book

It's the book month and the small publisher is trying to sell me a writer that was banned 40 years ago as if it was something new, it's the same publisher who is banning another writer that 40 years from now

someone will ask how come nobody understood his genius, but I don't say anything, I just listen a book about Eichman's life and moral problems well, I don't have the appetite, I must tell you I'd rather have a Bukowski biography, a Felafel or an Italian ice cream, even if these were not banned forty years ago, spinning cream.

So you want to be a poet

Soooooooo you want to be a poet, OK?

Here's how it works

If you're poor you can't write
because you have to work, right?

If you're rich you have nothing
to write about

If you have a lover s/he won't let you write
wants your attention

If you're lonely it's the loneliness that kills you,
the sound of silence
can be dangerous,

If you have many lovers that's good for sex but
not for writing busy all the time, phones and bills

Now get married and then
you have wife and kids

to feed and they shout all day, can't write
that's understandable,

you can't write, if you have no kids
your spouse wants one, so you have to deal with
doctors

no time to write,

now what kind of work should you do

Accounting? boring
don't make enough money,
you can be a doctor

too worried about your ill patients to write,
you can become a teacher, then you are talking about
writing poetry

you don't know how to start a fucking poem,

now, OK, become a famous poet
very very famous if you're lucky,
then you have to go to all the festivals,
judge in many prizes, when do you write
everybody is phoning you,
and if you're too rich then what will you write about,
said dat OK,
you will have all the time in the world, boats, yacht,
whatever
but there wasn't even one really great rich poet, or
was it, some were
real poor, most middle class you need some
education, you can
also be translator, editor, publisher but dealing with
other people's
writing doesn't help either, so get this into your head,
you have no
time to write, no matter what you do, no matter how
you manage it, no
matter who you are, and if in spite of that you still
write then man
you are a poet.

Many tongues

I left the Hebrew language
as others leave a loved woman
they have been trying to fuck
for ten or fifteen years, saying
woman I am a man, hear all the
other women that want me and
now I have to go and get what
I need from them, I am a poet
woman, and you can't be my
fantasy forever, I am poet in search
of a language and many tongues
have loved me and your door has
been closed for so long, I had to
open other knobs with other hands
I can't behave like an amputee forever
and now that so many doors have
opened, now you open yours to see
if I'm still there, I am not and when
you see me near it's because I took
a walk, a walk through my old habits
I don't need your tongue, many tongues
have loved me now and I don't miss
your never existing caress anymore.

In a few thousands years

In a few thousands years they'll say about us:
They had great poetry
but their technology was primitive
they used heavy materials for everything

They'll say:
They had great poetry
but their medical system was hell
they had to kill to save lives
they needed snakes to take care of people
and their medical system
was the very idea of a bad system
doing more harm than good

They had great poetry
but for some reason the most famous books
were written in a genre called novels
a strange way of complicating
simple stories

They had great poetry
but their world was a world of racism
they had black people and black poetry
gay poetry and minorities poetry
African Asian and western
and no one was equal to no one nowhere

They had great poetry
but they loved making wars
and constructing heavy weapons
and killing people and destroying cities

this was the most common sport of that time

They had great poetry
but their poets were mostly poor and unknown

They had great poetry
and anybody could write
they didn't need diplomas and studies
to do their craft

They had great poetry
but their poetry was useless
they thought that only science
could help people until
it destroyed everything.

And at the end of the lecture
a young boy will say:
Maybe that's what's needed
to write good poetry...
Because we have no good
poetry today.

The Reader

When the poem is read
by the good reader
his interaction
creates the
echo

that brings
to the poem
someone who's
never read poetry.
He's the best.

Waitress

I don't stare at you like I used to.
Ships interposed between our eyes
I watch the waitress young and eager to give
think of you when you were a waitress and didn't
return my love
coming with another girl to make you jealous
without success
staring at you like I stare at the waitress today
thousands of waves have covered our sands
the foam is white our hands are green
and you say "can you please look at me"
and now everything is clear, I notice I have been
dreaming
away from our Titanic, everything is tumbling down
I have forgotten your name, your secret name
written on your front that only I could see
you have forgotten to show it to me
you are hiding and you don't know it and I
watch you staring at me staring at the waitress
behind
your back and you can't see her she's the waitress
you were.
Now here I am an a thousand years old poet
reminiscing about the days you
were young I was never young.

Ask me for that love again

The one we couldn't believe would happen
the love when we didn't know we were in love
the love when I couldn't write a love poem
so busy was I loving you,
now I have so much time to write you poems
but you don't ask for my love
you are in front of me but you are memories
and in your eyes it is not me I see
but the idea and the image you have made of me
and I say now if she only asked
for that love again
but there is no again there is no going back
our cells have been destroyed and remade
we are not those two young crazy lovers
we are not who we are
and our cells have been given to other creatures
sitting between us as a sun
not letting us see each other
siting between us as a sea
not being able to see the other shore
now if you only asked
I would give you that love again
but you can't ask and that love
would not be the same
the look in your eyes the color of my eyes have
changed
they are looking elsewhere for someone else
asking for that love again
that love that will make me forget my pride
that love so much like malt whisky expensive and
making forgive

without a hangover in the morning
please ask for that love again
ask for that same love
but you won't ask you are trying to forgive me
you are trying to appease me you are trying all the
time
instead of asking of demanding
it is your it is my right to have that love again
if we had it once if we lost it if we know its taste
we have the right to that love again,
we can only blame ourselves, life and God.

*This poem is based on the poem "Don't ask me for
that love again" by Faiz Ahmed Faiz.*

A love poem if there ever was one

When your body was stone

I
was
a cat

When your breast was a leaf

I
was
a tree

When your eye was a star

I was
a shoe

When your were a river I

was a lake

When your hand was a stone I
was
a wallet

When your smile was a highway
I was a monument

When your lip was a continent I was the amazons

When your sleep was an arch my lips were a horse
when your hair was a lantern my legs were elephants
when your past was a bridge I was not your future
when your echo was a town I was not your cowboy

when you slept under foreign pillows I wasn't a
memory
when you laughed like a summer girl I was not in
your thoughts
when you were a whore I was not your client
when you were a mother I was not your son
when you were the virgin Mary I was not Jesus

when you were the sea I was not the shore
when you were a pigeon I was not the sky nor the
riffle
when you were prison I was not the bird at your
window
when you were the lover I was not your eyes
when you were a lesbian I was not a woman
when you were a daughter I was not your mother
when you were a grave I was not sand
when you were a raincoat I was under the sun
when you were an umbrella I didn't need shelter
when you were my body I was not yours

so how,
how can we say we are in love
after all these years
trying to find each other
under the caves
of our decaying
temples.

Freedom

Freedom is what starts a poem
but by the end you're always back in jail.

TAKE ME TO THE SEA

A Bird Reads

In the transition of the seasons
when the gallant wind blows
a bird sits and reads
the whole Torah
a bird sits and reads
all the prophets' words
a bird sits and reads
the chronicles of the world
a bird sits and reads
and praises the creator of the world
and people pass and watch
and say hey beautiful bird
beautiful bird who reads
their whole hearts.

A Jewish Dream

I dreamt an atomic bomb fell in Tel Aviv
and there was of course a big mess and many
dead

and then people discovered that the Jews
are not sensitive to radioactivity
because of circumcision

and because it is done on the eighth day
and not after months or years

and then everybody understood that Abraham
was a genius

and a great expert on nuclear physics.

Bells

Bells rang in my head like the falling snow
Bells rang in my head and no one could halt
them
And I said to myself when will these bells
cease
and I said to my wife dear wife dear wife
when will the bells stop
please stop them and snow falls in Jerusalem
and in my home only rain
and I see my wife walking in Paris lying with
a foreign man
she regrets it but she doesn't tell me
And I went to the Belgian woman born in
England and living in Jerusalem
who was tall and beautiful and said to her: I
will marry you
you will purify me and I will learn Torah and
the bells, the bells,
and then I went to red-haired Rabbi and said
to him all is vanity
literature is vanity of vanities medicine is
vanity and vanity all my life
and now I cry before you that I want to suffer
the world of Torah

to ache to cry and to suffer and to die please
let me die in the tent of Torah
and he threw me strongly from his coat and
from his yeshiva to the street and
all this time they distribute the loot all the
time two thousand shekels for me
and again several hours later they redistribute
the loot and money flows endlessly, every
drop is golden and bells in my head and more
loot is distributed and I call my wife and say
to her why don't they stop the bells
night falls and my wife does not answer
she brings me pure water from Shiloah's
spring and the water is so clean
I see in it the angel Gabriel and say to him
my death is better my death is better than life
in this world I know you have to repair
yourself but if I was allowed
to chose I give up on all repair now and every
moment
I give up on the beauty of my children and
leave
but I knew this was a game and that I will
continue and
live and bear the journey many years to
testify before the people
and thereafter a woman came with a white
transparent shirt and said, of course,

and I said of course what, and she said of
course you don't
win the prizes and they don't publish you,
you are far too pure,
they immediately see that no amount of
wealth that for no honor in the world
you will not lie they see that they will not be
able to buy you even if they cover you with
gold and you brighten as a glamour light for
them in the darkness
and when they see that in vain they have
shouted they are afraid and all the time
the bells in my head and they keep
distributing the loot and
I always receive more than all the others
thousands of shekels,
buy and sell and I receive more than all of
them and
then all the lamps begin to wither like tired
trees
and I try to seize them all try to prevent them
from reaching the floor
because there is a big danger in it and I run
from lamp to lamp
without success and the lamps fall and rain
falls again inside the house
and spoils
the records and bells ringing in my head four
thoughts at once

and I cannot control my head thinking like
fever and again they distribute
and again bells ringing is in my head and
then the voice said
evening will bring sleep and weeping and
morning will bring joy
evening will bring sleep and weeping and
morning will bring joy
and the warm hand caresses me, holds me as
an infant
and puts me in the cradle to sleep.

Food for the Worms

After my death I will be glad to be food for
the worms
as the earth gave me food
as I ate the fruit and the chicken
the citizens of the soil
will eat every crumb of my body
and I will be happy
glad to see that even in my death
every part of my flesh
has a place in the world.

A Voice Calling

I heard my voice say my name
in a nice way
and I saw a carriage in the skies
with a white horse
a golden carriage with no one in it
I entered and we descended to the earth
I entered a lane leading to Eshkol Avenue
on its sidewalk people applauded me

I went back from the street to the sea
I took two stars and played with them like a
 juggler
then I put the stars on my chest
and felt their warmth
I returned the stars to their place
and their faces smiled.

A Ray

From the sun a ray to the moon
and from both to the sea
in the sea they hit a volcano
and fire came out
to the land
and everybody was afraid of the fire
except me
as I knew that once it hits the earth
it becomes gold
and I took a bag of gold
and with it built
houses for orphans.

2000 Years Again and Again and Again

2000 years
we missed Jerusalem
and not Tel Aviv
we missed
the temple
and not McDonald's
and now everybody's talking
about common sense
economic future
Israeli shares
standard of living
and financial peace
for every piece.

and I say to you
all these things pass will pass
from the world
and forever
in this world
the longing will remain

My Hometown

There are days I only think of it.
As if there was nothing in the world
but longing.
Other days, life and its banalities cover
everything
and I walk feeling that no one
will ever understand
my language.
Some days I don't understand
my language.
As if I was walking without legs
and the distance between me and the earth
just grows and grows
still I don't fly
it is an imagined
walking
an imagined world
instead of

a solid land.

Material Rain

It was raining and raining and raining and the
rain didn't stop, it rained
and rained, and the world
was wet, heavy and material
and I watched my line leading me
in this heavy rain
people were locked into themselves
as in our times
they possessed everything, but joy
they had all the matter in the world
but not love, they had
cars, machines, TVs
computers, until they understood
they had nothing but
the knowledge of having nothing.

The Longest Journey

The longest journey
is arriving
at
the place
where you are.

Spain

Spain is a song
by Serrat
sung in Spanish
a summer night
full moon
in front of the sea
the girls dancing
to the rhythm of Los Bravos.
And, you, contemplating
them
so young,
not courageous enough
to say the word
breast.

Lucia

When I return to pick up
the skin
of the oranges
I will find you
seated
under the olive tree
with your familiar smile

When I return to pick up
the skin
of the apples
I will find
your face intact
on your aging body

When I return to pick up
the skin
of the people
under the olive tree
only your shade
will be shining like
an emerald.

*** Lucia is a feminine Spanish name which means
she shines.**

The Country of Lightning

In the country of lightning
the black becomes rare
precious
the white disappears within its whiteness
and all you find are
things you never looked for
you forget what were you looking for,
why you came
to this wooden house,
who your ancestors were
and what were they looking for
in these lusters
forgotten in the sound
of the thunder.

The Man Who Never Saw Rain

When he saw it
the warmest summer of the century
he thought that the skies were crying
so he started to cry himself
he felt pity for God
whose creation has been destroyed
his tears melted with the rain
until they reached the soil and the ocean
his tears were not in vain
a young woman came to him
kissed him on the cheek
took him by the hand to her home
offered him vegetable soup
brought compassion to his life
without tears.

A Disappearing People

I don't know why
twenty years
I only meet crazy people
telling me that this is
the end of the Jewish people
everything if this and that happens
will collapse
why I meet
prophets of disasters every day
and I forecast them
whole moons of bliss
why they always speak
about the vanishing Jewish people
they were always vanishing
and I only see
immigrants and more immigrants
houses and more houses
roads and more roads
sons building cities
sons coming back to their borders.
Nobody knows where these frontiers are
and after two thousand years of
exile
I wish ourselves
two thousand years of
borders.

ANSWER

I shouted in the street so where is
god, nobody looked at me
people bent their heads, we
didn't see this madman, we didn't
hear his question, and I asked again, so
where is HE, what is he waiting for
people won't understand, they won't
improve, and if the redemption does
not depend on their repentance, then
what is the answer to my question.

3 Suffi Poems

1.

My faces asked:
the right face asked for water
the left face asked for milk
I took the breast
and the milk was watered
the water was milk.

2.

I heard the wind of the desert
calling out my name
who am I when I am
who am I when I am not.
I am the world.
I am God.

3.

On my way to Mecca
barefoot
and with a white cloak
I drank the desert's thirst
and ate the desert's
bread.

End

What
was so good
about this world
that we'll cry its end
except the expectation of its end
and to another world
the world that comes.

The word is longing for the word
Love is longing for love
Woman longing for the woman
Prayer longing for the prayer
Light longing for the light
Belief longing for belief
Truth longing for the truth

Everything
Shadow
Longing
for light.

Spies

The poet in front of me
In Max Jacob's park
writes the world
spies the end of the world
sketches the world
millions of poets in parks
all over the world
write without readers
write to the future
to the past

Like the Wave

Like the wave hitting the stone

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without
exhaustion

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without
exhaustion for days

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without
exhaustion for days and nights

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without
exhaustion for days and nights and months

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without
exhaustion for days and nights and months
and years

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without
exhaustion for days and nights and months
and years until it penetrates through it

Like the wave hitting the stone and not
slackening and continuing without

exhaustion for days and nights and months
and years until it penetrates through it and
arrives at another sea

So is the poem.

Death of Death

A man contemplates the Seine
He loves his erasing city
He loves the dark waters
a man watches the seine
He loves the lights
The lost loves
The never ending nights
the Dream of death
the Death of the dream
the Death of death
a Man watches the waters
He loves his disappearing wife
his culminating life
He loves his sons
Thinking of him
about the nights
he contemplated the Seine.

Reality Contradicts All Theories

What's going to happen to you, when will
you understand
that every day, every moment
reality contradicts
all theories
and the gap only grows and grows
now you say you have a tail
and you are bald from both sides
you also say that your car can fly
that an amputated man can walk on his hands
that dead people can drink coffee
when will you, what happened to you my
friend
what are your eyes for, your ears
what is your head for?

Again

Again as before we will
see you return to your premise
Jerusalem entire city being whole
again we will go back
to join the connective axle
Between us
and The
one
truth
once more we will go back
to the correct place
in the Place
again we will go back to see
your return to your premise
in the Place

again we will go back from the exile
all the states and all the nations
Jerusalem's exile from her axis
again Jerusalem will go back to being whole.

Passing Through the World

You pass through the world
and learn from the suffering
learn from the suffering
to pass through the world
learn to see
the running of the others
you are richer than the runner
you,
sitting on the sidewalk
and looking at the runners
at their success
despising your learning.

Dates

Once I used to think a lot about death
I used to determine accurate dates
in which I would die, the last one was
at the age of twenty eight
now I am 33 years old
walking in Paris and seeing dead people
thinking they are alive, and I
walk in Paris from store to store
and don't see any books of poetry,
they are in the corner that no man
can see, in a city of dead people
people without poetry

once I used to think a lot about death
now every day alienates me from death
I go from death to life
to the light and someday I will see the big
light
on the day all people nickname death
it will be long ago like always
there I will meet you at seventeen
to tell you there is love, and not only
disappointment
there you will meet me at seventeen
to tell me there is life, not only death

and our lives will change without end.
past and future
will cross will kiss inside a Star of David
past future present
will unify will explode
then I will say to you this is not life
this is not the world because there is,
above all this there is something else
another world in which you and I are one
in which there is no death, only life
another world in which the light
does not become a shadow
in which it is possible to view the sun
another world in which you are not in which
I am not
in which we are not alone
In which we don't see ourselves
in which we are but we

the more I live
the more
death distances from me.

The Elections

For fifteen years I didn't vote
but this time I don't know what caught hold
of me
maybe the need for something new
a fresh feeling
you go
enter the polling station
and do something completely
banal
put a slip into an envelope
and hope
you decide the future of some ex-generals
and some future politicians
I went and voted of course
against
but after I voted and my candidate won
I wanted to change him
I was immediately against him
I want elections every second day
every hour
if possible
everyday we'll change someone
everyday they will fight
like gladiators in the arena
and we will put in slips

and more slips

For fifteen years I didn't vote and I
know I caused a terrible suffering
to half of the people
they just loved the other candidate
and I didn't love anyone
and I don't know why
what got into me
that I spoiled their love
mostly I am a very liberal man
when it comes to sex.

Counting

I am always comparing. At
my age my father was married two years
he had his second son, me. I have been
married for 16
have three children. at my age
Kafka was already dead. Rabbi Nahman,
Rabbi Yitzhak
Louria all were dead before they reached 40.
Bukowski hadn't published his first book yet
I have published 6, not bad.
My son is 14, at his age I had already lived
through
the most important event in my life
I had emigrated from one country to another
I became a migrating bird without wings
my poetry takes me from Europe
to Africa, from South America to Canada
from Israel to Spain and back,
and to the land of poems, that's the land
where I build my nest until the next
migration

Mumia Abu Jamal

Some say we are in a time of law
some say our democratic countries
Have the best Juridical systems ever
but by the torah's law you couldn't be death
sentenced

two witnesses have to see a man
and before he killed tell him that it is
forbidden to kill
and that such crimes get a death sentence,

and the Talmud tells the story of a man with
a knife
running after another man into a cave
then the man comes back with the knife full
of blood
and says that the one who was killed took his
knife and killed himself
and that he took the knife back because it's
his and it's expensive.

Tell me, is there judge that would send this
man free
Where is the jury that would say “Not
Guilty”
but for all we know nobody saw him killing
and by Jewish law he is a free man

and God may judge him if he wants,
or after all, if nobody's seen him killing
how do we know he did it?

Free Aryeh Deri

*Each time we reach out our hand they cut
off one of our fingers*

Today the Supreme Court
sent Aryeh Deri to jail
for Bribery.

The first Moroccan-born politician
capable of being prime minister
will go to jail
the day after 9 Av, date
of the temple destruction

A land of prophets
a land of prophet killers

He talked of love and got hate
from a supreme court that knows
the meaning of discrimination
All the members being ashkenazim
with one Arab and one Sephardi
to cover their shame with laurels

The president of Israel left just yesterday
his post, he received bribes, he will
have to go to his 2m\$ villa in Ceasaria
to rest from his difficult job
he admitted to receiving half million \$
but he will not go to jail

A law for the rich and a law for the poor
a law for sephardim and a law for
ashkenazim

And still I know that Aryeh Deri is free
because his soul is free
because he said what he thought
and the judge is in jail
because he caries his ghetto
wherever he goes

And still I know no justice has been done
and Aryeh Deri committed no crime
except being a Sephardi
who will not play by the rules
of creating a Sephardi party
now 15% of the parliament
of being the only party to speak for the poor
the dispossessed, for people who have been
amputated
not only from their possessions, but from
their memory

from their pride from their freedom and
from their will

And

I am Aryeh Deri
twenty years old after publishing
two poems in the most prestigious literary
magazine
sitting in front of the editor
telling me that there is not a chance
that I'll write a great poem like the one she
published
never again

I

am Aryeh Deri my manuscripts being
rejected by all the publishers and wondering
what was wrong with me

I am Aryeh Deri

doing a great translation of Edmond Jabes to
Hebrew
and being told that it was not good enough
just after I was invited to the Hebrew
university
to give a lecture on the translation

I was never good enough for them and just
wondered

what I had to improve
but there was nothing to improve
I could never be part of them
I just didn't know it back then

I am Aryeh Deri
when people said I didn't look
like a Moroccan as if it were
some kind of compliment

I am Aryeh Deri and I am going to jail
free as he is
the freedom of never lying to yourself
the freedom the judges never dreamt about

and I am Aryeh Deri writing in English
because they will not publish my poems in
Hebrew
especially not this poem

J'accuse J'accuse J'accuse
this is the land where law is not equal
this is a land where judges are full of
prejudices
this is land where being Moroccan and
talented
is a threat

J'accuse J'accuse the supreme court

of being a court of discrimination
and of being a court that defends
the interests of mediocre people

and I am Aryeh Deri arriving to Israel
at the age of twelve and refusing to forget
and refusing to adapt to the common lies
of coming from a culturally-deprived
country

I am Aryeh Deri
and today I know how come 3/4 of our
prisons
are inhabited by sephardim
I am half of these prisoners
unjustly incarcerated

and I am Aryeh Deri tonight with his family
with his children and their tears
and I am Aryeh Deri this is the
saddest day of my life

I am Aryeh Deri for I know
he talked of love and each time he
reached out his hand for peace they cut
off one of his fingers

and all I have left is my middle finger.

12.7.2000

some explanations:

Sephardim are Jews from Arab countries, mostly from Morocco, Irak, Yemen, and the Maghreb. Ashkenazim are Jews from Europe, mostly Poland, Russia and Germany. The trial of Aryeh Deri started ten years ago when the journalists asked how did Mr. Deri buy a flat of 5 rooms in a very cheap district of Jerusalem, Har Nof. No one has ever asked how many other politicians or supreme court judges lived in Big Villas. Mr. Deri was the youngest minister ever in Israel at the age of 29. He always spoke of the discrimination of the sephardim and was the head of the Shass party, a religious-sephardic party that now has 17 posts in the parliament. This party is accused of all the illnesses in this country, in spite of the fact that their influence is more symbolic than real. The only real achievement is a chain of schools in the most deprived zones of the country where 40,000 children learn.

I Am the Virus

I am the virus
I am smaller than your mind can grasp
but I frighten you

I am the virus
I have yet to say my last word on earth
if you think that aids is awful
just wait for me at the corner
wait and see

I am the virus
I can kill you in eight months
or in eight days you still don't know
I can kill in eight hours

And your doctors and scientists
they will accuse me
but I can come when you leave a hole

when you prepare the soil for me

but you, people afraid of me,
you have shares in pharmaceutical firms
that make millions
and lie to you while they sell you
the same drugs that help me kill you

I am the virus
people of the earth
while the Dow Jones goes up
I will bring you down.

2000

Two weeks into 2000
I think about how,
When we were young,
we imagined this year
with robots and flying cars
with peace and great lights
we are still driving the same cars
our fathers did
but, at ten, we didn't dream the internet
my cousin and me
promising that by the time we were both
forty
if one of us made a million dollars
he would give half to the other
none of us did too well,
we didn't even make a million dollars
and the planes fly longer to far away places
but not far enough.

Departures

You've left already
you just don't know it
Your feet know better than your heart

Entangled

I'm too tired to dream
entangled between the end of 1999
and the joy of being alive
while noise pollutes my ears
the air isn't a friend anymore
Is it love?

The weather is bright
winter will never come
I once dreamt snow in the summer
I once dreamt things would change
I was once a dream

I'm too tired to dream
entangled in everyday living
that was once my enemy
my little piece of sanity
not being part
of anything.

To My 12-year-old Daughter

Soon you'll be young
The world will be yours
and you will not know it
The world will be yours
and you will not own it
by the time you know it
the world will not be yours
and only the word will remember.

Tiredness

This tiredness goes through my teeth
tiredness all over my bones
generations of tiredness
tiredness from so much future

I was born so old
that I was never young
so old
that I was never healthy
never had teeth
wishing to bite this world
wishing to swallow all this meat
these pastries
with so many pesticides

I was born too late
in a world too young.

I
was
never
young.

Forgetfulness

As a plate
forgotten deep in the freezer
that someone took out at the right moment
as if the meat was
waiting
to be eaten on this
precise day
in which smoke
is converted into
pure
mountain
air
thanks to that
forgetfulness.

Rough Times

Whatever we do this is incredible
the rough times were better
when we moved alone along those labyrinths
times were lonelier than thought
the Thames looked better than the Seine,
Look at me she said holding my hand
as if to die
look at me
the weather is crazy but so are we
this rain will last forever
but we won't
this world will last forever
but our body our beautiful body deteriorating
as a God falling from the skies
look at me I said
lines of poetry as lines of your face
they get smarter as they get uglier.

Smarter

Now my words are smarter
my knowledge reflects in them
but I would give anything
for those years of anger
of true anger against the world
when I was naive
when I thought deeds could be done
words could change people
words could change thoughts
but now I am smarter
now I am wiser
as the world darkens
before of my eyes
without being able to do anything
without wanting
not thinking of suicide anymore
not against them nor against me
I just see my shadow in the water
staring at me and smoking a cigar
staring at me with sleepy eyes
disappointed in me as I am
disappointed in it.

We

When I say we
who am I
when I say we
am I an Israeli
beating Palestinians
or a Moroccan
looking for peace
when
I say we am I
the oppressed or
the oppressor
when I say we
I
never was in a war
never in a concentration camp
when I say we
I never beat an arab
when I say we
stones were thrown at me
by moroccan children
when I say we
am I still me?

Maria

I met Maria in Paris
she was from Venezuela
and she asked something about anti-Semitism
I explained about being a Jew in Europe
being a Jew in school in France
about Vichy
She stared at me as if I was speaking Chinese

Then she came to Jerusalem
and in front of the western wall
I told her the history of the Jews
from Abraham to the Greeks the Roman
The Arabs,
and she kept staring at me as if
I were an alien

She didn't discuss, she didn't try to
understand
anti-Semitism

just thought it was a crazy thing
coming from a country where such a word
doesn't exist.

I just hoped there were more people like her
looking at you like a crazy man
when you try to explain the hatred.

Our Strange Shadows

Strange now to think how my hair could
shrill
from the shadow of the sight of you
as daily life contradicts all our hopes
as our fears become realities
our work coming between us
and the jealousy from my success
strange now to think that it was your fears
that prevented me from making it
that it was my fears of your leaving
that deterred me from facing my talent

things may have changed lately
still the core of the problem is still there
my endless need for air
and your endless need to control everything
things that cannot change

we met in a moment in time
where our roads crossed
and since then we have been traveling
in different directions
we may talk forever
but we are forever farther
and farther away from each other.

Again in Front of the Sea

And if water
has memory it should remember
me swimming on the other side
if water remembers all
those who swam away their blood
in history I am watered

if salt has memory
it should dry the blood

anchovies, soles, hakes
I remember your taste
like of a fruit tree of ancient flavors
like an olive oil
from the beginning of a century.

The Voyage

And there is a light
you know there is light
that will lead you
all the way to the cave
where a bottle of old wine
is awaiting you
since the falling of Lucena
800 years ago you know it is
waiting for you like
a candle that never reaches the end
you know it is awaiting you
now if you had the guts
to take the baton
and start the voyage.

A White Tourist in Austin, Texas

1 A.M. after hearing Butch Hancock at the
Cactus Cafe
Walking back to my place, one hour of walk
no taxis my feet aching
many Austin rangers cars roaming around the
city
and a few minutes walk before me a black
american
and a police car stops near him
speaking words I couldn't hear
then I walked all the way and the car waited
for me
and the young policeman said Good Evening
sir,
I answered politely, it seems people don't
walk in this city
I
walk in every city, I walk everywhere
'Is everything OK, Sir?'
Yes, thanks
Then he spoke to me as a brother to a brother
'You should stay away from that man, he's
dangerous..."

I said thanks
maybe he was right
I don't know but all the way I had the feeling
that something was wrong
Would he have said the same if he was white
Why didn't he think I was dangerous, he
didn't ask for an I.D.
and I was the stranger in his country
How many blacks have become criminals
because cops warned the others about them

I would have never understood that
if I didn't learn what it was being a Moroccan
in Israel
and how the police and the authorities, the
educational system
have done the great job of converting so
many Moroccans
into junkies, thieves and whores,
somehow here I am the one people should be
afraid off
but in Austin, Texas I was the white guy, I
looked decent
I still have to figure out what side is better,
or, better,
which side is worse.

What's the Way Out of Here?

After half of the best bottle of Bordeaux wine
in the house
I looked at her
and it was like the twilight zone
or the body snatchers
asking myself what am I doing with this
woman
fifteen years have gone
and three children
30,000\$ mortgage
I saw the word *mort* in it
and then I was hell
everything and everyone
was hell.

Missing in Action

I'd rather miss you
than be with you.
reality has divorced itself
from the dream
and they keep
distancing themselves
as a ship from the harbor
but since scientists have proved
the earth is round the question is
will they meet again
when and where.

An American in a Jerusalem Bus

"Oh, My God!
my wallet
it's gone
where's my wallet
it's gone
mygod
mywallet
it's gone
Oh My God
what am I going to do
it's all gone
no, it was here
and now it's all gone
my passport my credit cards
my money
oh my god my wallet
what am I going to do
everything is
gone..."

Fighting Time

*"Death
why fight it?"
K. Gärken*

What is this deal with death
what are they hiding again
why try to save someone for a few hours
with the money it costs to feed a thousand
“and thou shalt choose life”
who is making money from all this
how do they manipulate us
into believing this is great science
what’s wrong with all this
so wrong I cant see it
cant find the right words to capture it.

Something Is Deeply Wrong

It's this knowledge you see in people's eyes
that something is deeply wrong with this
world
these faces saying how can we think it
but we know it, it's like well it should be
right
we now have everything, food, houses,
heaters air
conditioning, everything our ancestors could
only dream about
and then something went wrong and with all
this having
we have less than the hungry and those who
died in the cold
I see it in their faces in their eyes they look
at me for answer
and I look at them for questions, yelling
begging don't stay mute
at least say it loud ask the right questions!

Man of the World

When I am traveling I am the poet
of many tongues, the international
voice, the cultural vulture

Back home
I am a threat
to the consensus
that people born in Morocco
are born illiterate and should die that way

Long ago I learned
I can't change the place
where I was born

I learned
that I couldn't be good enough

to write as
bad as they expected me to jump
it was too low for me and my back ached

so, now I am a schizophrenic trilingual poet
a trischizophrenic perlingual poet
you can taste my tongues all over the place.

Between Lightning and Thunder

Between lightning and thunder
by the time I see your light
there is already too much noise.

Four

4 whores were killed in Tel Aviv nameless,
faceless, passport-less
4 whores like the four mothers of Israel.
4 whores like four horses. Altars of flesh,
4 whores looking for, dreaming of, a new
future
and falling into the past, becoming
merchandise

Behind pictures of this advanced world
another one is boiling
a world where people are flesh, for sale, a
world
where people are rats in laboratories,
where talk is forbidden, where crying is a
luxury

Because we are a culture of pictures and
photographs
they make us believe what they want
so they can go on making their money

But who are they, aren't we all guilty of
holding shares

and portfolios of all these industries and all
this system
where we have while others are slaved to
death.

Autobiography

To say what you did may
be important
but the most important
things in our lives are
the things we didn't do
thousands and millions of pages

a kiss we missed

a trip we didn't take

the sentence we didn't say to
love

The mistakes we didn't make

the lipstick on my forehead

my grandfather
not leaving for Argentina

or not becoming a U.S. citizen

the poem I didn't write
because of an urgent phone call

The call I didn't hear

and was it
God?

The Difference

If I die today how long
before you sleep with someone else
how long before you
can't remember my face

If I die today how long
before you love somebody else
how long before I am but
a memory

If you die today will
I ever love another woman
Will I ever be loved again?

Beret

Hey you with the small beret
on your head
what were you thinking of
when you sent your people
to war
you
who said you loved people
what were you thinking of
when you saw the soldiers
and the civilians
dropping and dying
like tears from a child
who lost his mother
did you still think you were
right could you still think at all
and when you were told your grandson
was dead did you still think
you were right.

And now under
the grave do you still feel
remorse.
Under the soil and the beret.

Father

Father oh father
it is now
when time has changed every memory
that I remember
that a picture of you reminds me
you were my father
was I ever your son
son of my mother
father oh father
it is now
days before my son's bar mitzvah
reminding me
how much
I have become like you
trying to appease the mother
of my children
but not succeeding
and ultimately
leaving them to her
hysteria
father oh father
just like you
never there
to give a hand when
most needed

but always there
to show me
something is wrong
with these screams
these ever changing laws
imposed by mother
never could understand what were the laws
what was the logic
only the screams and the strokes
and your silence
your voice of thick silence
because there is no silence in this world
father oh father
dying from day to day
imprisoned in a house
coming to a country you never understood
and too old for that

I am 38 yrs old now
always counting years
always numbers
and at this same age
you got married
me I am already married
oh poor pitiful me
for fifteen years and have 3 children
not wanting another one
maybe because my ill brother my dead
brother

was the fourth
trying to save a ship before the shipwreck
and drowning himself to save the others
diseases are no coincidence
sometimes they save families
from the ultimate self-destruction
Father oh father
it is your grandson's bar mitzvah
your grandson
who bears your name
you would have been proud of him
maybe of me too
though you were proud of me in your life
not like mother always saying negative things
and with any success "we'll see..."
I remember how you said
if you persist like you do you will make it
I may be making it now though I feel no
difference
still feel under-doggish as always
as a Jew between Arabs
as in the big family
as in the small family
and in Israel
as a sephardi between ashkenazim
father oh father
farther oh farther
did you take me with your silence
more than mother pushing me?

with your absence
it was your way not to agree
it was your noble way
to accept
it was the way of a spoiled child
only child to a mother
who had 10 abortions after birthing you
father oh father
from being rich to dying half-poor
but you had at least a kiss of death
dying in your bed
in your sleep from a stroke
and not in an hospital you always hated
the Talmud counts 913 different deaths
so even at that moment we are not equal
still you suffered your emphysema
for 5 years
unable to walk for ten minutes
and then the natural treatments
and the fasts the improvement
then you died when you were feeling better
I called you the night before
and you said that mother wasn't feeling too
good
she wasn't feeling too good
and you were going to die that same night
then when I arrived home I went to embrace
mother
and she pushed me away

she always pushes me away when I try to
show her my love
and strangles me with hers when I try to keep
some distance
there you were in bed fifteen years ago
covered and I didn't kiss you
I couldn't see you I was afraid
though you always had jokes about dying
you always had jokes about everything
but this was not a joke
death is never a joke
father oh father
it was just two weeks later
that I knew my wife was pregnant
those were the days of love
from then on
we have not surmounted anything
just accumulated problems
as if marriage was a bank
never lending money
you would have liked that image
and immediately say something
about it and Maimonides
or Ortega Y Gasset
something not related at all
just to show how much you loved
them or that jewish german writer
Stephan Zweig
you admired so much

I haven't read him yet
some pages from a book
at a friend's house coming
to Israel and being treated
like an eastern nobody
and still being silent and noble
and still traveling to Venezuela
for three years trying to take us there
exactly what I am thinking of doing
then I don't do those things
I can't believe I am finding
the same solution
were you running away from Israel
your family life or your wife
probably all of them
father oh father
I was there in Madrid
on my way to Caracas
and I was pushed to
mother from one side
telling me to come back to Israel
and go to the army
and you telling me
there'll be no problem
to get a visa to Venezuela
how close I was to being with you then
and how far
because I didn't believe you

I didn't believe what you were saying about
the visa
now thinking of leaving Israel
to save my son from the army
and he telling me he wants to be a combat
soldier
for me the army was something
unconceivable
until I was there
but truly I was never there
these were three years in which
I learned how not to be
where I was
maybe you taught me something about this
too
and three years later when you came back
you were ill and broken by life
by the decisions you had to make
by the illness of your son
and by your marriage
you were sixty
and you had no more will to live
though still you remembered that some
medium
told you you would get rich at an old age
no you didn't
trying to sell shoes
the days you could work
in a market whose laws you never understood

whose language was strange to you
you were nice where only force was admired
honest where honesty doesn't mean anything
and I helped you a bit then
but it was too late
still I caught you once or twice
when the lungs were better
smoking a cigarette
just like that Sabbath in Tetuan
when I came to the bar looking for you
and you quickly threw the cigarette away
and asked 'what are you doing here?'
hoping I didn't see the cigarette
knowing I did
but I didn't say anything
Father oh father
farther and closer
each day I live
you were more human in my eyes that
Sabbath
you were my loving father
although all the caresses seemed to come
from mother
and all your caresses seemed to go to sister
father oh father
excuse me for I have sinned
I was too young to see all this
insanity all this family illness
all this pushing me pushing me

toward places I never wanted to go
I have learned all the ways to escape now
from everything
but I have not learned how to stop escaping
how to be in the place I want to be
so I don't have to escape
I haven't learned yet
to go my own way at my own pace
with my own shoes at my own time
still mother is there pushing me
and my wife showing her discontent
from one woman to another
as if I should act in relation to them
either agreeing or reacting
will I ever find my own way
father
did you ever?...

Craving

I crave for loneliness
where others crave for food
I crave for empty streets
lonely clouds
deserts
empty houses
to look at my past
to pass through that empty door
to look at that mirror
where nothing remains
and be happy
for myself
by myself
the luck of the draw.

Forgetting

I have forgotten more than I'll
ever remember
A hard disk erased of memories
maybe gone forever
because of a virus
maybe to be saved someday

I have forgotten more than I
remember
and not the trivial things
I have forgotten
the smell of my first lover
the title of my first poem
one day of my life
from dawn till dusk
before I was twelve years old
I have forgotten
the smile of my hometown
the color of my room
I have forgotten the date
of my death.

I have forgotten more
than I'll ever remember.

Ending the Century

The twentieth century coming to its end
started with great hopes and expectations
now months before the end of this
millennium
we can just hope that it ends quickly
and that it does not have a new catastrophe
under its belt

one hundred years to learn how arrogant we
were
how ignorant
we still are
to learn humility

And maybe
by the first of January 2000
we will learn in spite of this century
of killing and death
we will teach ourselves to hope
again
to hope without expecting too much.

Here

In these streets
the angel who walked before me
helped me walk
prevented me from falling
saved me
when I had a car accident
in the head
near the synagogue
on the head
of the year
here
in these streets
so empty from me
I cried for the first time
I smiled for the first time
and from here I traveled everywhere
now I came back
seeking understanding
from the houses, the streets, the sidewalks,
the people.

If You See Me in the Street

and I don't say hello to you
don't think I don't want your company
or that I am trying to hurt you
if you see me in the street
and I am thinking another poem
other words
that may finally
describe the firmament line
that connects between my legs
and the town where I was born
a giant rainbow
if you see me in the street and I don't say
hello
it is not a declaration of war
but a look
into the future.

In the Land of Immigrants

In the land of immigrants
still an immigrant.

people say to me
maybe your feeling is the feeling
of every poet

and I say
I speak and you stay silent
I cry and you laugh
I shout and you mock
I explain and you categorize
I feel pain and you run away.

The Home of the Stranger

I am a stranger everywhere
and no place is strange to me
from Tetuan to Istanbul
I hear steps of Ladino
people who walked everywhere
with the smell of an orange tree from
Granada
see houses with stones
that the builder put while dreaming
of Lucena
tracks of Jews
with smells inherited from generation
to generation, and
no place is strange to me.
I have no home
and everywhere is my home.

Sand

it took me twenty years to learn to cry in
Hebrew
then my words became mild
as a stone whose secret has been revealed by
the rain
that it was made of sand.

If They Look for Me

*"You walk on the land until
one day the land walks on you."*

say
that the land was wet
and the shoes called me to go
backwards
in slow
steps

say
that the sea was calm
and the small waves
escaped from the beach

say
that the sun was full of beautiful
spots
that the moon was empty
that the soil in which
my ancestors walked for years
in the land it was buried
and wept my absence.

To Be an Ethnic Minority

When you speak about your past
they say you only speak
about the past

when you speak about other things
they don't listen

when you shout
they say you are a screamer

if you speak politely
they are impressed

if you cry
they say you are a weeper

if you object
they say you are a liar

if you laugh
they say you are a clown

If you criticize out
of concern for the future
they demand you mind your own business

whatever you do
you both come out
bald.
and you balder.

When I—You

When I cry
you laugh

when I say what I feel
you tell me it is not
what I feel

when I state my point of view
you say I am angry

when I say I am angry
you say I am a primitive

when I accept the facts
you say I am passive

when I explain
you say I plan
to run

for parliament

when I say I don't like to run
you don't hear

when you don't hear
I
say the most
beautiful things.

Buchiki Buchiki

Buchiki Buchiki
while I was making love
I thought about you
about my wife who said
it happens

you could have died
in a car accident or in a thousand other ways
Buchiki Buchiki
but no
a whole country went out to kill you
by mistake
Buchiki Buchiki
my compatriot
from a country that vomits her citizens
you went to be a waiter
in Norway
the same year
I immigrated to Israel
Buchiki Buchiki
and a whole country went out to kill you
by mistake
while you were thinking
about your big Norwegian love
your dreams of Europe

a new country
full of money and hope
and I was thinking about my maid Fatima
whom I loved so much
who went with her husband to Belgium
and a month before
I immigrated
she came for a visit
and brought chocolates
and I loved her very much
but didn't know how to act
and stayed stuck to my chair.
Buchiki Buchiki
your dream was murdered
by mistake
by the same country
in which my dream was broken
in which I was left to poetize
your dream.

Ahmed Buchiki, a Moroccan waiter, was killed by mistake by the Mossad in Norway in 1973. The Mossad thought that he was a Palestinian terrorist.

The Swallows

My mother said that they were going to
return
the dark swallows
but I never saw them returning
I didn't see them leaving
and if I did
I don't believe I could differentiate
a swallow from another bird
but my mother and my father promised
So I thought it was a very important matter
and the truth is that the I believed them
just as they told me
We were returning to our homeland
the holy land
and I wondered
how we could return
I don't remember ever leaving
but still I believed.
Today I see the swallows
are not dark and I see
they have not returned
And that the only homeland left for me
is the land of poetry.

The Good Intentions and Bad Milk

They steal your memory
with good intentions
Then they tell you
you have no history
that you are primitive

they want their past
to be yours
so they can impose you
a present
you don't understand

when you start remembering
they try to help you
they tell you you are crazy
until you are no longer sure
whether it is memory or imagination
events or television

they don't know, either

but they are afraid
your memories
are the proof of their discrimination.

Hit the Road

They told you
take the baton
head for the road
graze with the roses
this is not your house
leave your home
this is not your house

They told you
kill the horses
destroy the towers
demolish the floor
take the sandals
and kiss the road

They told you
this is not your land
this is not your country
this is not your religion
this is not your people
you are not you

and the branches of the tree
were weeping because
a huge branch
was not letting them grow.

La Mere et la Mer

The sea is the mother
the water the womb the
waves our caress
the sea is the mother
the matter of the world
the sea not the land
the mother
the lonely waves
one by one
give us life until they tire us
and take our lives
wave after wave
life after life
we disappear
while the sea remains.

Country

I asked Morocco to be my country
and it was not my country

and I asked Spain to be my country
and it no longer was

I asked Israel to be my country
and still it was not my country

I asked exile to be my country.

I wanted the Hebrew language to be my
country
but it did not return my love

I wanted Spanish to be my country
and it was not granted

I pleaded the birds for directions
they spoke to me of clouds
talked to my Moroccan grandfathers
and they spoke to me of Spain
talked with them about Spain
they answered me Jerusalem
spoke of Jerusalem

they talked about the shrine
spoke about the shrine
they talked about Lucena
spoke about Lucena
They answered: Granada.

I sat them altogether at one table
and asked them where my country is
A big silence exploded
and with that silence I walk the streets
seeking another silence.

Declaration of Independence

I am a one man
country

in my country
I tolerate everything

my country is secular and religious
fundamentalist and liberal

I make elections whenever I want
and cross the frontier without any problem

I am not represented in the UN
so I don't cause trouble to anybody

in my country I am the prime minister
and the eternal immigrant

my frontiers go with me wherever I go
and my government does not ask for money

I am a one man country
I never declare war
and I do not have territorial claims
from my neighboring countries

I am a country of one man
who gets along with his wife.

A Very Distant Country

I come from a very distant country
and I have this to say:

I am very tired
my tongue is dry
when I speak I don't understand what I say
when I am quiet I hear voices
asking me to speak for them

I come from a very distant country
one in which the trees were still green

my father lost his home when he was
fourteen years old
my mother disappeared when I was six years
old

I am so tired
that even my sandals need a bed

so please
do not ask me to work

pity me
if you let me rest
I will tell you the most beautiful tales
the tales of my country,
please let me rest
rest
rest....

Mother

1.

Where are we going Mother?
We are going to our country
to our land.
Where is our country Mother?
I can not say its name
it is forbidden.
Is our country far away?
On the other side of the sea, son.
Is the trip long?
Two thousand years long
three weeks on the road
five hours on the plane.
And the children in that country, who are
they?
All Jews, like you.
And How am I?

2.

Have we arrived yet, Mother?
Years ago, son.
Because mother, I do not see that we have
arrived

these are not Jews like me.
This are your people, this is your country.
But, mother, I do not see the trees of my
childhood
and the people's words seem very strange.
'*Esto es lo que hay*'. (This is all there is to
be.)
But you promised me we were going to our
country
and this is not my country this are not my
people
these are not my Jews.
You can leave.
Where to, mother?
to my hometown
neither my double nor my shade lives
anymore
my children were born here
and even they
look like strangers to me
my woman is from another country
she doesn't know our traditions
my languages are different from the human
languages
I do not have where to return to
I have no country
I have no people
and this journey doesn't end
there is no way to finish it,

I am forever stuck in that four in the morning
The last smell of coffee with milk in the
coffee-pot
leaving toward Ceuta and seeing Algeciras
from the sea
Remaining forever in that nocturnal trip
that never sees the light of day and no matter
how I try
I am a foreigner here in this homeland
that you longed for so long
now that you say to me mother
that I can go to Spain
with my enlarged tribe
that I should head toward another exile
another place will become exile
like Israel, Jerusalem, Tetuan, Lucena
all our homelands become exiles.

La Campana

I walk these streets
Maharaka Anouar street
Mohamed Torres street
King Mohamed V street
and their names
caress my heart
and I see
running
always parallel to me
the boy I was
running
to eat an ice-scream
in La Glacial
to buy cakes in La Campana
going and coming back

I see
the child
is afraid
and I ask him
"what are you afraid of,
beautiful child?"

He doesn't answer.

Are you afraid of
the adult you will become?

He doesn't answer.

Are you afraid of
the Arabs, from whom
you were always warned about?

He doesn't answer.

He is sad. Tears fill his eyes
inside of him there is happiness.

I try to embrace him
but he is afraid of my caress.
He is afraid that after the caress
a blow will come, in

the back, in the face, on the hand
he is afraid that after the caress
screams will follow

and I see that my hands toward him
cause him an asthmatic attack
he longs for love
but is afraid of a caress.
he loves
but is scared to show it.

He even loves the Arabs
but he has been warned
until his light dimmed.

and I say to him
from a distance:
don't worry
you will grow to love the world
in spite of everything, in spite of everybody
it won't be easy
but you will grow to shine.

And thanks to this encounter
I grew up to be who I am.

Building

Sunsets so many sunsets
the sunsets of our exiled homes
forever settled by strangers
who will never understand their stones
homes like my home
who lived my childhood
who lived the illness of my brother
homes like my homes where
expatriates from their exiles were born
to the land of Israel, to foreignness within
their homeland
homes crying their builders who left
don't say builders say sons
sons of their homes
and now they have no
fathers.

Suitcase

I always carry a suitcase
take it everywhere
waiting for the moment
they will chase me
from house to house
from town to town
from country to country
and the suitcase is full of toys
no child has played with
full of memories
of people without a past
full of love affairs
that never materialized
full of clothes
no one will ever wear
full of anger
on a quiet river
full of discriminations
by people of illusions
full of cruelty
toward people who reached their hands
and were told it's the end
who wanted love
and received a suitcase.

Home

The way back home is full
of pine trees
resins odors,
strong
smells of black olives
and in the bread
hashish

once, and for five hundred years,
the path back home was
marked and clear, like
a lane to the temple, five
hundred years, then the Diaspora
came to an end, and the house
hangs between the two sides of the rope
and me in the middle
walking and stalking
in the land of Israel
In the land of Morocco

and at both sides
homes

Once the road home passed
through El Rincon, the corner
and there,
there was a wonderful Italian ice-cream,
today
in Conus, in Jerusalem, a wonderful Italian
ice-cream
and its cold
fills my heart
warms my exile
but there is no solace
on both sides
the house is
in ruins.

The Earthquake and the Sea

The Agadir earthquake
I was three or four
There were always talk of it
as a fixed threat hanging over the heads
of those walking upon the land
and there was another earthquake
We went out at two o'clock in the morning
in panic in the car
the whole family aunts and uncles
to the sea
except my grandpa and grandma
who weren't awakened by the phone
nor by the hooting of the cars
of all the uncles driving near the house
nor from the knocking on the door
The next morning
everybody's intact
my grandma said she didn't feel anything
but my grandpa felt something moving,
maybe like he felt a few moments before his
death
when he was brought back to life

and he shouted "why did you bring me
back?"
around a big table I see my father and my
mother and
my brother who went to Brazil
when I was twenty and haven't seen since
then
A few hours later
a few days before
he was going to emigrate to Israel
he delivered his soul.

Shabbat/Return

I returned to my hometown
as a man asked to spy for his country
when I arrived
It was like I never left
when I left
It was like I never came back

I returned to my hometown
as a man called to return to his mother's
uterus
after not seeing her since his birth
When I returned I found
no mercy, no love
and no milk

I returned to my hometown
to find my childhood steps
And I found them in every street, steps
of one leg, because since my departure
I never learned to walk on my own two legs

I returned to my hometown
as man called to clarify that his dream was
erased
and found that it only grew
because my hometown is my hometown
only when I am in it.

The Bread and the Dream

Day after day like a forgotten sourdough
The longing keeps growing
creates a bread
and rejects a dream
that here in a new place
in another country
the dream will be bigger
and it will be able to conceal
the humidity of my hometown
The dream broke the bread dried
wars were followed by wars
and only the memory remained
like an elephant returning
to his ancestor's graves
screaming a bit near them
and following his own road
falling not falling
still, a different elephant.

The Big Bed

It's been there 7 years now
we're not used to falling on each other
in the middle
of the night of the bed

when we do when a hand falls on the back
we're not used to it anymore
it becomes an intruder into our dreams
calmly we refuse it as if it was a phone
in the middle of an inter course

7 years ago
it was liberation
of the heat of love
these days the bed is bigger
than the house
our hearts they wander
into different shores
our rivers don't meet
in the same sea.

Still Still

Still here I stand
tall and proud
they did not break me
yet
African and white
they said I couldn't write
that poetry is for the others
writing for the sick of mind

Years they closed the moon
others they jailed the sun
but I could see through their darkness
the light of my grandfather's candle burning
in me

Still tall, still still
wondering what they have for me
wondering if anyone is stronger
than my words.

Opening the Door

When they closed the door
I hit hart and shouted
when they didn't open
I knocked on another door
when they did not open
I opened a window
and when they closed the window
I opened the skies
and when they closed the skies
I opened my heart,

and all these times there were words with
me
in many tongues and many languages
words like angels helping me to get through
the closed hearts of my people
habitants of this dark planet.

Friday

Before the six days war
my father came home with a
new car
Renault 4
awfully
green
that changed the old
Simca
and told us that he bought it from a priest
and that the car is very well kept
because priests
know how to take care of their cars
and it was the car in which we drove
until we emigrated.

And two days before the war
an Arab friend met my father

and told him
that the end of the state of Israel is near
only a few days away
and that the Arabs will destroy Israel.
For a whole week we didn't leave the house
and went to the vacation site
near the Spanish border
in case we'd have to run away
and two weeks later
my father met the Arab
who was afraid even to say hello
or stare at
his eyes.

Take Me to the Sea

Take me to the sea
the land is drying my throat
take me to the sea
by hand, by foot,
by plane or by train
take me to the sea
the waters will heal my wounds,
my skin that refuses to
communicate with the world
the cold sea will cure
my ears that won't hear
the world that warns me
from the bad people, the others
are always bad
take me to the sea
there, on the sand, I will learn
to walk like an infant
take me to the sea
today, today I want to see the sea
take me with your kind arms
that took me to learn from the cities
but now, please, take me to the sea.

Middle

In the middle of the hustle in the middle of
the commerce in the middle of life
she sat there
the left-handed poetess
in the middle of her twenties
writing immature poems
rhyming with the same word
in the middle of the crazy race in the middle
of the day
everybody out to drink coffee in the middle
of work
and in all of this madness she sat
long black hair
concentrated on her full notebook
lightening the insanity
showing people that running is useless
that they are in the middle
of nothing.

Henry Miller and Important Publishers

The rich think that the poor are poor
because they don't exert themselves
or are not worthy
so are the writers when they are published
by an important publishing house
they adorn themselves with their ridiculous
success
it is the right moment to explain to them
that henry miller published his books in
pornographic publishing houses
while important publishers were publishing
writers no one remembers
exactly as they will be forgotten
because the mediocre writers have often
the quality of having good public relations
and the big writers are too busy writing
to waste their time making contacts
and that's the reason why
big publishers go bankrupt
or become small publishers.

I Made It

He used to come to my office
every week
and we used to go to eat Humus
and he would talk and talk
about his successes
and never stop
and I listened.
One day I did
exactly what he used to do
I talked about my successes
an hour long
and each time he tried to change the subject
I came back to my successes
using his own words.

Since that meeting
I have not seen him nor heard of him.

A Free Copy

He meets me after two years
and immediately asks me
what should he do
to lower his cholesterol
I smile
answer something about a plant
and he asks again and again
unbelieving
will it help
and I
just like two years ago
ask him why he asks me
what to take
if he doesn't believe
in plants
then he starts asking about his father

and his blood circulation problems
and his bypass surgery
and keeps asking questions,
then it is his son
and when I tell him I published a book
he asks me
why didn't I send him a copy
as a present,
then we say goodbye.
I hope not to see him
for at least
two more years.

So Long, Wonderful Atheist

I read Bukowsky
(so long
my friend
hope you have
discovered
there's life after
the tomb
the horses
the women
and
the wine)
and I say to myself
what's a guy like me
who believes
in the coming of the messiah
and the reconstruction of the temple
doing
reading Bukowsky
and it reminds me of a poet friend
who used to read Elliot
in the synagogue
Elliot may be o.k.
but Bukowsky...

yes, it is coming...
I prefer one Bukowsky
a German guy telling the naked truth
to a thousand rabbis
discussing the Kashrout of a cucumber
and, immediately after saying it
I feel
tremendous
guilt.

On Poetry and Cholesterol

He spoke about cholesterol
and cholesterol and cholesterol
and it being genetic
and about the diets that don't help
about the pills he won't take,
near him sat the poet
and spoke about his poems and his poems
and his poetry
and how important it is
and how the young poets
are now writing like him.
I tried to talk but they wouldn't listen.
I concentrated on the miso soup
on my table and thought that
it is good
that poetry is not genetic
specially good poetry.

Antipoetry

Like Nicanor Parra I write antipoetry
antipoems for antipeople in antibooks
antipoems for anticritics for antireaders
antipoetry for antiassholes in the antimatter
antielectrons in the antiatoms for antideaf
in my antiadaptation to the literary world
in the antigroup of the antiliterature
antipoetry for antieditors for antiprizes
for antilectors for anticorrectors for
antipublishers
and it is not because I don't like poetry or
because I don't like critics, it is because,
like any other antipoet
I only know
how to write
antipoetry.

Bukowsky Again

It happens more and more
often
I start reading a book
and after a page or two
I go back to Bukowsky
read primo levi
and back
to bukowsky
try to read
toni morrison
and back
to bukowsky
I stopped reading
the israeli writers long ago
it seems they never left
the boy scouts
and I think about the fact
that this game is
about reaching
ten people
who need my poems
to survive this world
as much as I needed
ginsberg
jabes

burroughs
and now
bukowsky
and I don't know who
they are
and probably they don't either
but one day they will.
I am not sure I will.

Self Censorship

Poet

now that you can say whatever you want
that nobody is going to incarcerate you
that nobody is going to kill you
what are you waiting for?
or maybe you have nothing
left to say
why are you escaping
within meaningless metaphors
of superfluous images?
why do you get lost
in the words
and lose the meaning?
Who is censoring you?
are you censoring yourself
to get a prize
to be seen on T.V.
to be honored
so you can be forgotten.

Tree

This table on which I write
that once was a tree
planted by a living man
on dry land
where a dead man lay
who once wrote a poem
on a table made of wood

this man
is he a tree?

Poems on Recycled Paper

Maybe paper on which someone wrote
a poem
nobody read
that editors didn't want to publish
a wonderful poem, so wonderful
maybe the same poem now written
a poem telling us
how to fix the world
a recycled poem
on recycled paper
words recurrent and repeated.

Beans with Tabasco for Breakfast

I sat to drink an espresso
a morning of hamssim desert winds
and near me sat a known poet
less famous than me, though
and he was speaking with an intellectual or a
man from the T.V. or the radio
they were speaking about ars poetica
about ethos pathos and epos
and science and education and
the mixing of cultures and the integration of
cultures
in a very ashkenazi language
and I asked myself
what the hell do these people eat for
breakfast
red beans with tabasco?
and I consoled myself that I don't have such
kind of friends.
anyway
they completely spoilt the taste
of the coffee.

Writing

Is
the illness
and the cure.

Words

We saw our poetry flowing
like sea water into a river, like
ground water to the soil, but
we expected too much from it
We expected our poetry to make people
better
to change the world
to make us more relaxed
to bring men closer to god
to make our wives prettier
to save us from death
we expected from poetry, and rightfully
from what should we expect
beside from words.

The Horoscope

The horoscope said that these days
I would be prolific, would write anything I
want
and I am here quite dry looking for words
not the best of poems not the best of days
fighting with languages mother tongues
father lips
words that don't exist, a sentence no one can
skip
and I really wonder because all the
horoscopes
I read about me are right always right
sometimes they are the only real thing
in the weekend newspaper, the news
seem like science fiction to me.

The Professor

The professor wrote half a page saying that
my poems aren't worth anything
in the biggest paper in Israel
my novel, he said, has no literary merit but
has some sociological value, thanks.
Now, if he could he would put me in the zoo
write below "Moroccan Poet"
the last that they couldn't brainwash.

Once I dreamt this would happen, many
articles against me
but as all dreams when they become reality
deception strikes.
I wanted a fair fight and he just gave his own
fears on paper
his own psychopathological fear that these
niggers want
to conquer his literature, well, Kafka received
the same
treatment at my age, surely Bukowsky and all
the good ones.
When you break a wall you have to expect
that some stones
will fall near you, hopefully not on the head.

Marginalized

Reading

‘Ten marginal Cuban poets’
I see that nine of them
were in favor of the revolution
until they became
anti-revolutionaries
and became great poets
with very little freedom
some exiled
others destroyed

If I start a revolution
I will learn from Castro
and kill all
and I mean all
those which are in my favor
and end the revolution
and all the fucking
revolutionaries
that one day become
anti-revolutionary
and then
a poet like me
in a chilly day
in Jerusalem

in a rotten and Democratic office
between one accounting work and another
will be able to read some poets
who wrote good poems
in wheelchairs in jails
in exile with their own blood
and to enjoy such
good poetry.
Long live the revolution
the anti-revolution

Castro and ContraCastro!

Mothers and Poets

It is interesting that mothers insist
that their sons be
musicians
maestros
even composers
but
find me a mother who encourages
her son
to be a poet
or even
a writer
send him to take private lessons
with famous writers
with poets
so they will learn
who takes a loan
so the son can write.

we have a reputation
of youth spoilers
revolution
starters.
not like musicians.

Virtual Poet

When did it happen that you felt
schizophrenic
that every step in this city was only a shadow
of the steps you never walked through other
streets
when did it happen that you became one
person here
frustrated to the core, quick to anger, easy to
cry
and the laughing socialite whenever you left
the airport
when did it happen that you started a virtual
life
with unseen friends through emails and web
pages
with unseen readers loving whatever you
wrote
while all readers here reading the same
poems
only could see the anger, the frustration,
when did
it happen that you became two persons, one
for the physical world one for the world of
words.

Can Do Better

Always torturing myself for things I didn't do
why didn't I write a long novel
my novels are too short
why not the long poem,
why so many languages
am I really good at any of them
why don't my books sell?
I am such a bad writer and poet
when I am not writing why do
I feel like the village idiot
or maybe I am I should
leave all this and make some money
for my family I should divorce
and face my fate and write all day long
I should and I could and I should
and I know it's my mother behind all this
and all these teachers always saying
I could do better, all my friends
always saying I could do better
that's my image the man that could do better
but if I could do better or write better
I would have done it,
wouldn't you, you lazy bastard!

Success

is a letter from
Anna Baram
A woman I have never met
telling
me my poems have
touched her.
Success is not
a literary prize
not a contract
nor
someone inviting you to give
a reading or an article
in the paper.
Success is a letter from someone
from the other side of the world
Contact
that's the miracle
of art.

Your Good Reputation

All you care for is your reputation
good poems never had a good reputation
you care about your publishing house being
respectable
your cover looking serious, professors and
critics liking what you write
On your way to being respectful you have
lost all the light you had, my dear friend
and you don't see it, when I say this to you
you think I am jealous and I am
but not jealous of your success but of
the poems you may have written and you
have not the books
you may have written and you won't, the
books I would have read and I won't.

Under My Tongue

My mother tongue is Spanish
My country's tongue is Hebrew
My lover tongue is French
My poem tongue is English

You may think I am happy
to live in all these languages
I can never decide how to talk
or where to walk
or what the language of my t-shirt is
or how should I speak to the mirror

you may think that I am lucky
having rich people's troubles

The Literary Cafe

I went to the literary cafe again
like I did twenty years ago and
felt just the same
what am I doing here
like a Japanese among Chinese
talking to people that seem transparent
never understood all these writers and poets
making themselves important
and being so ridiculous
guess that's the way I look to them
and most of the time to myself too
ridiculous.

It's just that everybody there has
read something I wrote and forgot
in a literary magazine
and liked it
the wonder is the editors don't come
or a fucking literary prize
no I am not looking for honor
I fucking need the money
you get me out there?

I Have Seen Your Black Eyes

I don't know your name
it scares me
but I know you woman
you are the birth of the worst killers
and you have a name

I don't know your name but you are after me
you look for me in desert streets
and in crowded buildings
you haunt me in my sleep
and when I wake up you follow me

I don't know your name
but I have seen your face
calm as the sea in its calmest day
before the storm
always before the storm

I have seen your hands full of little dead
children
I have seen your nose smelling dead human
meat
you never have enough of it, don't you?

I know you are there hiding
behind universities explaining
why you don't exist

I know you were once a child
as innocent as the moon
in a romantic poem
just before it causes the big storm

I know you, I have seen your eyes
and you don't scare me
if I die in your hands
there will still be my poems
to follow you wherever you go
to haunt you and destroy you
day by day
as you do to us
yes, my poems, my little poems
said to be useless
my poems will follow you
you unnamed destiny of our souls
for we will not be slaves in our poems
anymore
even if it is for a second in thousands of
years
you will know that we were not slaves
if only for a second
and you know

don't you
you know and how you know
that sooner or later
that little poem
will be your end.

I don't know your name
but I have see your eyes
lady I have seen your black eyes
and you
you couldn't really look straight
into my green eyes.
Could you?!

11.9.2001

Welcome to the 21st century
welcome to the new millennium
it started today in the twin towers
the big eagles are fighting back
they don't like freedom
they don't like rights
they want us all wrong
they want us all dead

Welcome to the 21st century
aliens from space need our DNA
welcome to hidden foes
to falling steel

Welcome welcome, Marhabba
have some tea to calm down
welcome in the name of Allah
have some coffee
have some cookies
Darna darkum, our home is your home
let's die together in the name of Allah

Welcome, welcome
where have all the cowboys gone?

They are looking for flowers
to put on the graves.

The Day The Jihad Destroyed Berlin

The day the Jihad destroyed Berlin

My lover was dying
Of cancer
In the Madrid underground

You were in Manhattan
Feeding my sons

Killing my sons

Next time you start a war for peace
Don't draft me

Next time you talk about peace
I will stop being a pacifist

If peace is war
Then I am the bomb

Destroying Berlin
Restoring the Reconquista

I am the church of Judas
The holly virgin of the whores

Santa Maria
Open your door to me

It is time
We abort a new God.

A LAST KISS

Should you ask me to please you
Then let me introduce myself
I am the king of coma
The supernova of defeat
When you were breasting
Your mother's milk
I was already a breast
As big as the moon

So, now, my pretty bitch
Get into my vagina
And suck the hell out of me
Suck out of me my hell
I will push you
To the door
And penetrate you
In the dark morning
Of my kingdom
In the kindness
Of my knights

And then when night comes
My dear, my bitch, my butcher
I will hit you a last kiss
A last kiss hit at the ceiling
A last kiss to say hello
We have arrived.

Coming back from the dead

If I come back from the dead
do not hesitate to tell me
I was once a living person

If I come back from the dead
do not talk to me about death
don't even think of mentioning the weather

If I should come back from the dead
do not talk about the beauty of my body
or the duties of my past lives

Should I come back from the dead
ask me about poetry and crime
inform me of the last murders

Coming back from the dead
I walked through a forest of breastless women
A dying tree is something you never forget.

The Barking Poets

(written in the 6th international poetry festival in Jerusalem, 2003)

1.

A dog barking
seems to be very poetic
in any language
a dog barks
un perro ladra
keleb noveahh
it's poetic
There were seven of them
barking into the hall
from mouths of poets
but I didn't see one dog that day.

2.

I have nothing against barking dogs
I just don't like the sound
I prefer when they do it in poems
as if they were in the closet.
Too many barking dogs
that's another story.

3.

The day you read
you are entitled to a free dinner
it's like donating blood.
they used to give you a voucher

for a hot dog and glass of juice.
Now, that dog
he didn't bark.

4.
Jerusalem
crowded restaurant
twelve poets in three tables
barking
wouldn't it be poetic
Oh, so poetic
if we all blew up
in a terrorist attack
we'd be famous in a day
known all over the CNN
read by the masses
make our own statement
change the word
all the dogs from the universities
would bark around our graves
and we'd be anthologized
as the dead poets from Jerusalem
one from Serbia, one from Russia, one From
Spain, Portugal, India, Arabs Jews Christians
Buddhists, Hinduists
Now wouldn't that be poetic,

But I
don't want to be poetic
I want to bark.

5.

The old poets they don't bark anymore
they fall asleep while the young ones read
they've heard it all read it all.
when I am very old
a five thousand years old poet
I will be honored by Ph. D.'s
and too many festival
and I will fall asleep in my seat
telling them poets
I know what you've written
my friends
I've read it all
But I also know every poem you will write
or anyone will write
I have seen the one letter
I am not a barking poet anymore
I am not a man
I am not a poet
I am poetry

and then fall asleep
Oh! deep sleep
forever,
an bury my letter
with me
my barking secret
into the night.

6.

Old Buk didn't like the festivals
Old Buk doesn't bark anymore
only his poems bark

The End Of My Exile

And
when evening comes and you're not here
I feel you more than anyone else
and I cry
the end of my exile
the beginning of my pain
and I cry being half of me
being part of me without you near

and when
morning comes and dreams are real
and reality is a dirty sock
a messy joke
an angle that does not fit
call me know my dear my queen
I am not a king without your eyes
I am not a king without your voice in my ears

And
now that I have found my other half
the roots of my tree my other in the world myself
my true me my only me my only other
where do I go from here
where do I come from
you change my past in every word

Call me now I am shouting
I am howling my lost years
you were always there and I knew it

and it was easier then being just half a man
but now, now that I know, do I have a choice
can I choose at all, who am I to choose
who are we to choose what's been chosen
thousands of years ago, long before we were born

Be the end of my exile, be the end of my pain
take me where I can only take you
make it as the steps you walk lead me to walk
let our traces become the traces of one being
for we are one, my dear, we are one
and one day we will be born.

The Night

The night is young for the young
and old for the old

and a bird anybird
fears
flying

The cotton year has come
to carry us away.

A small Jew from Tetouan

When the Spanish writer asked me
how come a man of the world like you
eats kosher
I wanted to spit my cheese
all over his face
but
I just smiled

then came the emails
antisemitic articles against Israel
and Zionism
he also used the words
Jewish tanks
as if tanks had chosen gods too

I was polite again
and tried to convince him
that instead of knowing everything
and after he has traveled to every Muslim country
in the world
he comes to Israel and see it by himself
maybe then he will have arguments
based on his eyes
and not the medias

but he could not do that
these Catholics European
have just changed religions
they expect the Jews to be like them
or almost
they can call themselves Jews if they want

but they should act like them

Last article he sent to me
I just told him
that I will take no shit from anyone
and that he is an antisemite
although he thinks he is enlightened

and I am not a man of the world
I am a small frightened Jew from
Tetouan.

11 April 2003

My poem about the war

So
have you already wrote your poem about the war
your poems are not as good as Celan's
more like an Israeli William Carlos Williams
if you want I can send you my poem about the war
don't you write against the war
there is a whole site with poems against the war
there are seven million poems against the war
famous poets, put their names
along unknown ones, they have courage
they are soldiers of peace
have you written your poems against the war

No, man
I can't write against the war or for the war
because I am not an adolescent anymore
because
I AM THE WAR
and you, you are the war
and each one of these poets is the war
and their pensions in the universities
depend on the war
and the possibility to write about the war
comes from the value of their currencies
and the beds in which we sleep
were developed to win wars
and not to sleep on them
star wars, and the shoes we wear
were made by the wars,

and as long as we don't understand that we are
vultures
living from the dead, rising from our graves
there will be wars
because we are the wars.

Needless to say
I don't want to read your poems about the war
and I don't want to write poems about the war
because poems about the war
are the war.

Trains

I have traveled half Europe
on buses
because when I think of trains
I see Nazis delivering Jews
to the camps
it's like when I discussed with my wife
long ago about the bank's overdraft
and she told me that numbers for her
were numbers on hands.

I live in a country with many buses
and few trains
in the fifties the Germans
proposed to build
railways in Israel as indemnity
even the offer
was an offend and just a bit too much
60 years later
we are starting to see something
that resembles a railway system
but still, there is no Jerusalem Tel Aviv express
and no plans to start one.

I once took a bus that came all the way
from Tangier to London

entered it in Burgos
36 hours to make
it to London

I like buses
because they help me
avoid trains.

A Fool Such As I

What a fool I have been
I thought, what did I think, or did I think at all,
these were normal problems,
but you've been investing most of your time
in avoiding me
avoiding my body
my love for you
my tenderness
and now I feel sad
my body feels sadness through every pore
I was such a fool
and now I am pitying myself
and you
look at me and never ask
how I know
what I know
but I just think now
that I deserve more
that I can't punish myself no more
(now that I know)
that I am not a monk
and that you are not
the woman I think you were

and I don't answer your questions anymore
you'll only use them
to tell me more lies

and I am tired of lies

I prefer fights.

Ten good years

Ten years in love
and ten years wondering
where has it all disappeared
making concessions
trying to relive the past
don't we know
that things forced
are dead

we cannot ask for more than that
darling
the gods get angry when people love too long
any small discussion, over the door of a kitchen
or the name of a neighbor
can break it all
at once
into fragments
that will never again make a glass,

we can only remember, we can only thank them
that they forgot about us for ten long years
it's not what they meant, they just forgot us
didn't really believe we could make it so long
or they were just busy preparing more wars
whatever the reason
we must go on
life is full of disappointed men and women
from lost loves, shorter than our love,
we can only accept that it was a miracle
and miracles only happen in our minds
we cannot transmit them to others

or to ourselves
once they have decided
to leave our imagination.

Love in These troubled times

When this woman born in my hometown
known and unknown
not met and always in me
sends me her emails
or invites me to chat

I don't care about wars
gas, atomic bombs, politicians
my mother calls me to ask
if I have stocked water
for the coming war

I laugh
and then ask
any news
I have not heard about?
No, nothing new she says.

More people were wounded In Israel
in the gulf war in 1991
from the gas masks
than from the scuds
one hundred people, twenty of them dead
suffocated by the misuse of masks

and since then
seven hundred fifty million dollars
has gone into updating the masks
we are paying for it
and who's making the big money

makes me think of "all my sons"

But then
She
the mystery woman
who has written a novel
just like I write
the mystery woman
she invites me to chat
and she tells me I am her
I tell her she is me
two halves of the same energy
roaming in the world
a thousand miles away
and I am again in that paradise of fear
we called childhood
or in that time in space
when energies collide
I don't care about wars,
I know there are no wars
we have not fought within ourselves
I know that death is nothing and even less than that
I know that there is this energy that flows
this energy that is us
and is more than we can ever dream to be
because if my body dies somewhere
I know my energy is still there

and here.

Top Models

Each time I see one of them
I think of Chinese women's feet
forced to be small
in steel shoes

The other women jealous
of them
their toes deformed forever

Same as they look at models
dressed by gay designers
forcing them to look like
male adolescents

They are never sexy in my eyes
I wonder when they ate
their last steak, pizza, goose liver

every girl jealous of them
and they
living in a jail
very few will survive.

Cholera

The day the rumor arrived
that there was a cholera epidemic
my grandfather heard
a strong noise
coming from his room

In two years 10% of the city died
they carried their half dead bodies
to the cemetery
and no one in the house
entered the room

Two years after the epidemic ended
my grandfather went to sleep there
and became ill
but he recovered

In 1929 he lost all his belongings
the banks offered
to cut his debt
but he paid it all and was left without a penny

He became rich again
and died of diabetes
when he was 65
and I was 5

He was richer than me
taller than me

and balder than me

we bear the same name
and I hardly remember
half pictures of him

Those who knew him
say I resemble him

I would have liked to talk with him
today, now
in these troubled times
when my life is all falling down.

Call me

Call me later
when your parents are dead
and the line is not busy
Call me, call me later
when your teeth are not bleeding
from the men you ate
and your mouth is not on fire
from the words you did not say

Call me later
when the air is not humid
and your sons stop killing
call me, call me later
when the sauna is closed
and the cars stop smoking

Call me, don't forget to call me
when I have forgotten you.

The fire and the city

The poets are saying it
and the poets are fools
this world is going to destroy itself
we are only discussing
the number of survivors

Because the world was born from chaos
and chaos is what creates a world
Tohu and Bohu were a happy couple,
Tohu the chaos outside
Bohu the chaos inside.

Chaos was enough for chaos
and chaos was enough for the earth
enough also for the sky
and more than enough for God

But Chaos had no choice
and a new world came out of it.

And Neron Burnt Rome
because he knew
that the fire
was more important than the city.

We Wait

We have come to the city
to witness our own death
we have paid the taxes
to build the bomb
and now
we want to see the results

We wait
we don't know who will drop it
we are our own enemies
we just wait
when night comes
and nothing happens
we come back the next day

We have paid a high price for this show
we cannot accept a refund
for unused tickets
We have the right to see the real show.

What kind of God is God

Admiel Kosman, respected poet
was saying on T.V.
that God is in our body
and I couldn't help but think

Does God fart?

The same day
I was thinking about him
what kind of God is God
to choose a people
to ask us to choose life
and then having all the others
kill us all the time

Does this make sense

I wonder
if somewhere along the road
He will have some explanation about this

But, from knowing him
I know He won't dare
to explain anything

His silence
will be the only explanation
we will hear.

The pain of seeing

This is where I belong I said
but by the time I ended the sentence
I didn't belong there anymore
I was out of my own sight

I am one within the whole
I am whole within the one

so, this is the pain
of giving birth to yourself
the world looks more colorful
than color can blind
the world is more depressing
than the new moon
in a clouded night

I am whole within the hole
I have lost my teeth
and the new ones
refrain from growing

This is not where I belong
my place is somewhere else
but else is just a myth
always back to this world
and my dear human race

racing against me
loving the whole

within the hole
I now know the light
the aura
exists

although I still can't see it
I feel it around your head

I belong now to the things
I cannot see
around your head.

The Greatest Writers

Often, years ago
I used to ask myself
how come my favorite writers
were unknown in their lifetimes
or recognized very late
Rimbaud, Bukowski, Kafka...
so many of them so great

I could not understand
how their generations
could miss
such obvious talented writers.

Now, I feel like them
and asking myself
how come
I have been so misinterpreted
misunderstood
the clearer my work looks to me
the darker the others find it,

now I know
it's the clearest writer
that is declined immediately

for

literature
is
faking the real thing
and covering reality with words

and great writers
are exactly the opposite.

The Ballad Of Tommy Banana

The people who bought my book
Horses and Other Doubts
from Amazon.com
also bought the following items

Clean Underwear from Amazon's Gap Store
Cashmere Sweaters from Amazon's Lands' End
Store
Tommy Bahama Shirts from Amazon's Nordstrom
Store
Performance Fleece from Amazon's Old Navy Store

Cashmere sweaters definitely fit very well my
poetry
I can see people reading my poems
dressed in a Tommy Banana shirt
but what the hell is a performance fleece
and what's that got to do with horses

Buy Two clean underwears and one cashmere
sweater
and get a 20% discount on Moshe Benarroch's
books
Buy One Tommy Bananna shirt and
get 30% discount on Horses and Other Doubts

I love you Tommy Banana
and the wonderful world of Marketing.

Rebirth

Everything is going to change
every cell is going to die
and be reborn
and all is going to be different
the whole nervous system
he who remembers
will have a new memory
a newborn out of the living cells
for the first time
like Jesus born from himself
from the woman he once was
and is no longer
born from the cells
cells that became light
in the singing of the sun
in the songs of the moon
light born from itself
and light born from light
and then there will
be no more shadows
to lead the light
and no more lightning
to hear the thunder.

A new life

There was a time when I was the future
so how does it feel
suddenly
to be the past?

There was a time when I believed in the future
and what it held for me
so how is it feeling
a living dead?

The game was more serious
than words on a page
and the years
they were the barking dogs
silent in dreams.

There was a time when time was a question
a project a concept
I needed to understand my life
now it's parallel lines
meeting unexpectedly
and breaking the silence
in which all lies lived.

So, how do you feel now, myself my lie
how do you feel now
that you have nowhere to hide
how do you feel now
that myself is sitting in front of you
and you cannot skip it

you cannot tell any more lies to him
so how does it feel now
to see that everything was in vain
that even thinking everything was in vain
was useless.

There was a time when I could believe
I could live without belief
when I could think I was strong enough
to beat the word
to conquer the word
to rape the word
and convert her
into the perfect lover
but now
her clitoris
is nothing but a dream dreamt long ago
her naked breasts
lack the milk
that fed the earth since the day Abel was killed.
Here,
sit down
break a leg
breathe deeply
the air
that will kill you
breathe it into your soul
break into it
take it
take it as long as you live

take it as long as you die
despair
love thy fear
love thy defeat
kiss it in the legs
there is nothing heroic about it
don't lie
there is nothing in it
more than life
and lies
take it breath it break it
despair into you broken love
you gave everything to the word
and never
got anything in return
you expected a reward
but you never wanted it
you never knew what it was
so take it tease it break it
despair until kindness appears
a different kindness
a winning kindness
all her bones and flesh
made
from the deep defeat of man.

The face of Diane Wakoski

" My face

I have hated for so many years

my face

I have made a contract to live with

thought no one could love it "

Diane Wakowski

"I HAVE HAD TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH MY FACE"

You cannot see your face

you can see the mirror

reflecting your face

the camera shooting your face

the reflection of your face

The face is not the lines

it's the evading look in the eyes

the muscles doing a unique dance

the face is all the things

a mirror cannot reflect
a picture cannot picture.

Sometimes my wife
in front of the mirror
I ask myself how did I love that face
then I look at her to know
how the mirror hasn't got it
poor mirror he thinks he's objective
and he got it all wrong.

I need your advice

Buk,
My books going nowhere
poems improving
and writing all the time

my wife
meeting here ex boyfriend
the one she almost married
before she married me

unemployed, business bad,
and the children asking for more money
they think I am a bank

I had a lover a year ago
and was crazy enough
to tell it to my lady

and now all this is scaring
the shit and the piss
out of me

I know
I know what your advice is

" Drink half bottle of scotch

fuck a whore
but
don't write poems."

A poem Buk could have written

"When men were men
and women were named after horses"

he said
with his southern accent
as if the accent
was more important
than the words

drank one beer
and one more
looking lonelier
that his boots

then a woman came
and asked
if he'd drink with her
he was so helpless
and
probably named
after a dog.

Defeat

They say that lovers meet in many lives
a message in a broken bottle
now that you are leaving me
my ship my anchor my desire

My broken hair my message unread
now that you are leaving me
not knowing the strength of the waves
I sing you a freedom song

I was the stone the builder discarded
the lighthouse the captain could not see
the twilight we consumed to tears

They say that lovers meet in the next life
and they know each other by the white in their eyes
I, for once, admit my defeat as a modern man.

20 years together

You look at her again and again
many things you liked have disappeared
thinks you disliked
become bigger.
she's older.
you're older too.

and you ask yourself
would you marry her again

and before you have the time to think
the answer comes out of you
yes, well, yes, of course
I would marry her again

If
she was not my wife.

The Odyssey

20 years I have traveled the world
and I have learned two things

wisdom is found everywhere
and water always comes back.

Kiss me my love
I am your river
and you are my sea.

Leaving another book

are we getting older
or
are the books getting worse

did we read too much
do we know every trick
do we smell every story

are we tired of words
of bad written novels
poems stories

where are the books
changing our lives
our ways of thinking

showing us new ways
of looking at the world
showing us new worlds

where are the writers the books
where are the trembling hands
holding
a new book we knew
would change us.

Half billion birds flying over the holy land

watching us silently
heading toward the winter
what did they come to see?

To see the devastated temple
or to hear the Jewish new year?

five hundred million birds
shitting on our head

Once they had the secrets of the world
in their singing
and King Solomon could talk to them

Today there is no one who can understand
what they say

except the six billion ants
looking at the skies.

I must be doing something right

For some I am too religious
for others a heretic

for some I am antizionist
for others a Zionist fascist

For some too sephardi
for others Ashkenazi

for some too Moroccan
for others too European

not Moroccan enough
said one publisher

you are not a freedom fighter
not a true one

I am the only person I know
being accused of being extreme right
and extreme left

I am right
and I am left
I must be doing something right
completely right

still I don't know what the trick is
I can't patent it
have my own logo
and sell it
for two million dollars.

I must be doing something right
and that's
the last thing
a poet should do.

Love and time

we always live in the past
we cannot cope
with the present

twenty years married
still you just touch me
and I have an erection

Never read about this in a book

maybe it was sex all along the way
and like that French painter
(was it Degas?)
who painted all his life his wife
as young as the day they met

I only see
the sexy girl I met
twenty four years ago
in her black dance suit

Now, is this right or wrong

One outside marriage relationship
all this time
it took me two hours to erect

and I was happy
it was different

does this make sense

and we need to go our own ways
married or not
I need more air
and more sea
between us.

Change

No matter what I do or where I go
merchants keep giving me
too much change

I give them a twenty
and they give me change
for a fifty

The best one was in the
Mahane Yehuda market
gave him twenty
and he gave me change for a hundred

I told him
I gave you twenty
and he shouted at me
You are in the clouds
you gave me a hundred

I discussed again
until he noticed it was the man near me
who gave him the one hundred bill.

The big chains always make mistakes
and forget to debit for this or that
always in my favor

It's like of the whole world
wants to give me money
and I just don't know what to
do with it.

I made a deal with God
a few years ago
and told him
"This is it!
until the end of this year
I return the money
if they give me too much,
from then on
I feel free to keep it."

The year ended and things got somewhat better
for a few months
but then it started again.

I divided the world into two camps
the small merchant
and the big sharks
I keep the money of the big ones
but my god I am sorry
I can't live with the money of the small ones.

I go into Zcharya's Yemenite restaurant
in Tel Aviv,

One of the best and cheapest restaurants in the
world
where you eat a meal for less than 30 shekels (6 \$)
and he keeps giving me too much change
his wife always forgets to count something in my
bill
and they are always fighting with their son

and I say to Zcharya
who has come all the way
from Zan'aa in Yemen
and should be given the Israel prize:
" Aiwa Zcharya
you are cheaper than anybody else
your food is better than the others
and still
you keep making mistakes in my bills
and always give me 10 shekels
more change than you should.

I hope you don't do this too often
and it's only with me."

And he says to me:
"You are a saint!
a saint!..."

and I feel
a round cloud
above my head.

Life and Death

Life goes on
the dead can't stop life
but the living
can't stop death either

Years she strived to be pregnant
went through hormone therapy
the day she went to deliver
her loved brother died
in a car accident

My father died the day my wife got pregnant
before he knew he would be grandfather
to a grandson bearing his name

These are not coincidences
I see it happening all the time
like light and shade
they go together
more often than not.

Someone else

Memory becomes a burden
and we forget too much
but not enough
every year adds
annoying details
populating every cell of your brain
preventing you from seeing
the woman in front of you
she's now made of memories
not of skin, bones, smiles,
there are more memories
than her shoes can walk
and more shoes
than the tears you dropped,

Finally
you only wish to forget
you wish you could see the world
through innocent eyes
discovering a game
you never played,

wishing you were someone else
who'd wish he was
someone else.

Your Life

And you only live
your own life
you only see through
your own eyes
you live the others
through your lenses
no matter how much
you try
you are an island
living through islands

You can only imagine
how the others see you

You can go through
burning wires
deceiving wives
children you call your own

as the sun watches
every step you take
and wonders
why you still try.

Crazy world

Crazy world
demented world
what have you done to my people
never letting us come
and never letting us go

Crazy world
always on our way
stopping and killing us
whether we
are climbing the mountain
or reaching towards the sea

Crazy world
unable forever to accept
our different difference
forever ununderstanding
what you cannot understand
and not
understanding why

Crazy world
when will you ever learn
we never die

we are the only thing
in this world
that never dies

You don't know why
and neither do I.

Famous last words

He came into this world
without deciding it
lived a few years
wrote a few poems
and then died.

Life is

as hard as you think it is,
that's what he thought
while masturbating
to his wife's nude pictures
taken over the years
young she was

You can say that
I said it
because you were never hungry
a man whose dish is always full
should not complain too much

Life is as good as you think it is
If you can.

The poet and his mind

He called her before lunch from the market
asked her if he should buy a fish
She said
I am having lunch with a friend

His mind said
A friend? She probably has a lover,
While she asked if he wanted her
To cook the fish,

Oh, no, I'll just have a sandwich here,
A friend his mind said
She has too many friends lately.

Paris exists today

because I am alone
and a woman is waiting for me in London
and I can walk all through the seine
and the seine is all mine
and no one speaks to me
not even the waiter
I tell him what to do
what to bring me
he does not say a word
and the city is mine
I am the king of this city,
king of the city of loneliness
the city of lonely people.
King of the city of kings.

This poem is an answer to Rafael Guillen's poem
"Hoy no existe Paris" in which he wrote "Hoy no
existe Paris, porque estoy solo." ("Today Paris does
not exist, because I am alone.")

Suicide

He did it by himself
we still don't understand it
said his wife when I called.

Only saw him once
sixty years old retired
policeman

He drove me to Tel Aviv
three months ago,
spoke all the way
explaining how successful
his children were
The most important thing in life is the family.

He told me he came from Ispahan
me, my mother and my brother,
I was ten years old.

What happened to your father?

My father he went to a party with the Arabs
and the morning after
they threw
his head on the door.

Then my mother
made a tattoo on her face
like the Arab women did,

she took me
and my brother
and we came to Israel.

In Israel when she went to the market
policemen thought she was an Arab
so she went to a surgeon
and removed her tattoo.

They brought his head to our door
he was killed by his own friends
that's why I say we can't trust these Arabs
I am not afraid of them
but I won't trust the Arabs

I was a policeman
and one of my sons is a policeman too,
a few weeks ago I went to the old city
with my other son, and talked to the Arabs there
asked them to give him back his car
He was scared, I wasn't.

Not even scared of death.

A Hard Rain

These days
I feel like a dog before
an earthquake
barking and moving
from corner to corner
restlessly
everybody asking
why I am so nervous
impenetrable
uncommunicative

and I see the big fire
from my balcony
the smell of viruses on the air
the smell of dead people
too many to be counted

For I know, at the end
of the twenty first century
There will be less people
than at its beginning.

SPRING AGAIN

"WAR IS NOT WHO STARTED IT BUT WHO STOPS IT."

Spring again time to say things you'll later regret
autumn will come and contemplate
spring again what a lovely war
work for thousands of journalists
politicians seem happier than ever
to put on their serious masks
and the Catholics want all the Jews
to become Jesus and sacrifice their lives
for the sake of their image
Jews as victims always trying to listen
to their one time oppressors
what a lovely war so many articles
work for the weapon makers
and for the doctors work for the writers
and more work for the doctors
work for the nurses and for the cemeteries
what a lovely war
it's spring again
a lovely time to kill each other.

When the dream's gone

When the dream's gone what's left
a pair of loaves a bouquet of hair
the little road that led to the blueberry bush
where, as a child, you reddened your hands

When the dream's gone you are left
where the dead leave us in this life
living their amputated years and
wandering through their never ending death

When the dream's gone the phone number forgotten
the face of your brother no photograph can bring to
mind
the long eaten flesh by worms long dead
the road you took for fear of another road

Thou shalt choose life

When everything around you is death
and the world has again taken the road
too many times taken
ever one too many times

Thou shalt choose life

When everything around you is despair
broken arms and destroyed skulls
unlived lives and unborn children
names disappeared

Thou shalt choose life

Abel never saw his world populated
His brother invented murder
many deaths since left us
with too many poems unwritten
Books with white pages

And it is never obvious nor evident
that you should choose life
it's a struggle, the hardest one

Today I have chosen life.

Answer to a question a friend never asked

Sooner or later
you feel
you were born in the wrong time
and in the wrong country,
and that you live in the wrong place
you were brought up by the wrong mother
and you have bought the wrong car

you are living with the wrong woman
you have the wrong job
you are living in the wrong house
and you have bought the wrong washing machine

I can't be of much help, sorry
I can just tell you that at some point of our lives
and most of the time
that's what we all feel.

HARBORS

In your harbors
I meet kindless stones
desperate waves
trying to dispel
the kindness
of our memories

In your harbors
I meet the whores
of my lives
the reasons
of my deaths

Harbors
come to me
sweetly
undress slowly
take off your shoes first
then your bra
your socks

take off your lipstick
your skin
take off
the secrets

I already know

I see you dear harbor
I have penetrated you
from the deep sea
I have destroyed you
with my cannons
and the rain
was never my enemy.

Holes in my past

She saw a picture of me and my wife
in the back of a book
and asked me
what are you looking for
outside your marriage

I said
I am looking for you/

sex was bad
and the answer was wrong/

I was trying to fill the holes
of the past
fill
the loneliness
left in my years

and that's something I shouldn't do
shouldn't do

a week later
she left me
with more memories
to write about
the smell of her body
the kindness of her breasts.

Eden

The woman in me
will
one day
be
the man
who can
live with her.

TV Appearance

You spend your life
trying to tight words
and concentrate them
into a few lines
and once you become
a known poet
they ask for interviews
newspapers, radio stations, TV stations,
they ask you to take your altar of words
and convert it again into blablabla
to take your art
and make it as unArt as possible
to take your best poem
and destroy it
by explaining
what you didn't
mean.

....

Childhood

Childhood was a wave that couldn't be fulfilled
my grandfather diabeting his way to the grave
my grandmother's cancer just an apartment away
and my brother born to die at the age of eight

When a seastorm is a blessing your days are
counted
a lightning takes the form of Y no thunder dares to
answer
death walks in the house as a naked nymph
hypnotizing the women destroying the men

She's a ghost traveling through the centuries
and for each family she has a different face
she disappears often but she always reappears

Childhood is a promise no one can fulfill
no one can answer the why of a child
in the middle of a storm when mom cries.

BACK

We're back where we always were
we are killed and guilty
we are back in our ghetto
a big one this time
we are back into bad politics
bad politicians
and a world unable to understand
what we are talking about

Jews

We have forgotten the message
but we know the message
is more important than our lives
it is hidden there somewhere in words,
books, lost manuscripts, papyrus
dead sea scrolls, minds of dead people
it's all words in there
some computer someday
will decipher it
and save us from the world
and the world from itself.

A world without me

I imagine a world without me
but I can't

A world without me is a world
where people read my poems
my books

I can't imagine a world where people
don't read my poems.

In my absence people read more of me.

Maybe I should learn.

The black man from the back room

No one had the time to see the face
of the black man in the black suite from the back
room.

He handed an envelope to the clerk
and disappeared before he was seen.
Later people said his eyes were black
his skin was black "and not brown" said
the little child.

In the envelope his request:
100,000 dead children.
His merchandise:
two more years of oxygen.

The new Bukowski

browsing through the poems
it all makes sense
the rejections, my wife's screams
my children driving me crazy
in a few lines
he makes sense of it all

7 years after Buk's dead
John Martin promises more volumes of poetry
this is his fourth posthumous
352 pages, for many poets
this is the collected poems book

I have this idea that Buk
was not only a great poet
he was the greatest computer man on earth
and set up a program that when pushing enter
gives you a complete poetry book

we have the Fante poems, the races poems
the women, and the flies, the 3 A.M. poems
the father the mother poems
all his books like a novel
from childhood till death

I read a review of Bukowski in which the reviewer
attacked the readers, I read it twice to be sure
I hadn't got it wrong. Her thesis was
that since Buk was in a fascist group in college
(and yes he was for a few months

just, as he says, because he hated the left)
everyone who likes his poetry should ask himself
why he likes it
(meaning he may be a hidden fascist too).

You fooled them all, you mad bastard
you are still fooling them
they are angry that people, real people
read your poems
instead of reading their university stuff
and there will be more and more books
after your death to keep them mad
at you, they will say these are recycled poems
you like a Cezanne painting again and again the
same mountain
but some of us know you were and you are
poetry's only hope, poetry's only way
of not being lies in beautiful words
in complex lines and in frozen books.

My promised land of unfulfilled promises

First there was God
a deceiver of human beings
he should have
saved my brother
who died one year after we came to Jerusalem.
I was young then, I didn't know, that's
what god does best.

Then the people they deceive me every day
they promise, they propose
and they never deliver
and I
almost 30 years later
still don't understand what
they want.

The land of milk and honey
is hot in the summer
so hot my kidneys can't handle it
and 3 months a year I am a
desperate man
unable to do anything.
I was a man of mild weather.

The sea is too hot all summer long
I can only dream of my cold water

and there are the wars, the killings

the discrimination in every step I swallow
and behind it always
people screaming, cars and buses
making too much noise
just way too much noise.

I have seen your black eyes

I don't know your name
it scares me
but I know you woman
you are the birth of the worst killers
and you have a name

I don't know your name but your are after me
you look for me in desert streets
and in crowded buildings
you haunt me in my sleep
and when I wake up you follow me

I don't know your name
but I have seen your face
calm as the sea in its calmest day
before the storm
always before the storm

I have seen your hands full of little dead children
I have seen your nose smelling dead human meat
you never have enough of it, don't you?

I know you are there hiding
behind universities explaining
why you don't exist

I know you were once a child
as innocent as the moon
in a romantic poem
just before it causes the big storm

I know you, I have seen your eyes
and you don't scare me
if I die in your hands
there will still be my poems
to follow you wherever you go
to haunt you and destroy you
day by day
as you do to us
yes, my poems, my little poems
said to be useless
my poems will follow you
you unnamed destiny of our souls
for we will not be slaves in our poems anymore
even if it is for a second in thousands of years
you will know that we were not slaves
if only for a second
and you know
don't you
you know and how you know
that sooner or later
that little poem
will be your end.

I don't know your name
but I have see your eyes
lady I have seen your black eyes
and you
you couldn't really look straight
into my green eyes.
Could you?!

The Big Bed

It's been there 7 years now
we're not used to falling on each other
in the middle
of the night of the bed

when we do when a hand falls on the back
we're not used to it anymore
it becomes an intruder into our dreams
calmly we refuse it as if it was a phone
in the middle of an inter course

7 years ago
it was liberation
of the heat of love
these days the bed is bigger
than the house
our hearts they wander
into different shores
our rivers don't meet
in the same sea.

Still still

Still here I stand
tall and proud
they did not break me
yet
African and white
they said I couldn't write
that poetry is for the others
writing for the sick of mind

Years they closed the moon
others they jailed the sun
but I could see through their darkness
the light of my grandfather's candle burning in me

Still tall, still still
wondering what they have for me
wondering if anyone is stronger
than my words.

Opening the door

When they closed the door
I hit hart and shouted
when they didn't open
I knocked on another door
when they did not open
I opened a window
and when they closed the window
I opened the skies
and when they closed the skies
I opened my heart,

and all these times there were words with me
in many tongues and many languages
words like angels helping me to get through
the closed hearts of my people
habitants of this dark planet.

Love was never there for you (a song)

You were willing to give
and you were willing to try
you were willing to leave
and you were willing to cry

But love was never there for you
love was never there for you darling

You were willing to take
and you were willing to fake
you were willing to lie
and you were willing to hide

But love was never there for you
love was never there for you darling

(bridge)
and the nights turn into shadows
the shadows into snow
night after night
you know the world is not alone
you know you are alone

You were willing to cry
and you were willing to fly
you were willing to be cheated
and you were willing to cheat

But love was never there for you
love was never there for you darling

You were willing to live
and you were willing to take
you were willing to give up
and you were willing to die

But love was never there for you
love was never there for you darling

Israel

This is the land of 2000 years dreams
that so many leave disgusted
while others die to get in
most feel uneasy and disappointed and uneven
and they can't point to the real reasons
so many expectations so many eyes
so many discussions into the night
as if a country is a living entity
that should become some kind of messiah
as if being a Jew among Jews weren't enough
or is something no Jew can cope with
or know what to do about

Arabs around becoming more and more Nazis
targeting the life of my grandmother and my
children
as if every Jew held some kind of key to the
mystery
of this land of these people that never live by the
rules.

I took a walk on the quiet side
said God after his five o'clock tea
and there you are now
with a book to decipher forever.

Crap

He was half drunk, young and talented, still
he hesitated if he should ask the question,
my laughs maybe convinced him and he said
"Don't you feel sometimes, a few times, that all
you've written is crap?"

He almost wanted to swallow back his words
and was relieved when I smiled and said seriously
"Most of the time, most
of the time..."

It was like he woke up from the dead
"I mean, you, with all the international success,
the literary prizes, the reviews, the festivals, the fan
letters,
you, you have these thoughts just like me?"

"All the writers, from the greatest to the baddest
think most of the time their words aren't worth
anything,
from Shakespeare to you, through Milton and
Blake, through
Cervantes, through Marquez, and Bukowski,
everyday is like the first day,
some pretend they are sure they will be
remembered, most
won't admit their fears, very few do..."

I said, and was happy with my words.

More or Less

Ain't it wonderful after all
Ten books, and less than 3,000 copies sold
no one's waiting for the next
not even me, even though it's coming
a completely crazy publisher
who's willing to publish more of my books
even if he sells less than 200 copies
ain't it a wonder?

It's my fault and not my fault
but the problems is that
I like it where I am
no obligations no fear of reactions
not famous, for I believe fame
is the best destroyer of poets.

Ain't it a wonder?
I always get what I want
more or less.

Again?

It's again

"It's going to get worse before it gets better"
while politicians play again the game of power
for which they were elected or not, they are in
power
and now they have to show everybody they are
strong

It's again cries of children and mothers
fear of living and dying
the world was never better or worse

The end of the world is coming
says the Muezzin says the Rabbi
says the mystic
but,

the end was here all the time

the world has not even begun.

Time To Go

And if it's time to go I'll go
but you rarely know when the time has come
to do the right thing
to leave the things that have perished
when they look as if
they were just born today,

It's a place that once was home
or a friend that was once best
or a woman you never loved
a street where cars are torn

or a book, a poem with too many lines
a line for years in my mind
If it's time to go I'll go if I ever know.

It's easy

"You've published ten books, but it's nothing
it's very easy to write poetry
anyone can do that
I can do that,
now make money to buy a cottage
let's see if you can do that!
Ha!"

I never said it was difficult to write poetry, it ain't
but that's what I do, now go and write a good poetry
book
then I'll make money to buy two Mercedes and a
cottage
and also a Jag.

Money and Poetry

Never meant to get rich by writing poetry

but I'm not a bank either

First you are supposed not to expect any money
from publishing your poems,

O.K.

Then you are expected to pay to publish your books,
never did that,

and then, well, could you read my manuscript and
give me your opinion

no money,

and then you know many languages would you
translate my poems

or this or that poet, or my uncle

then we have a roundtable 100 miles from your
home would you come

we may talk about your book and immigration,

you should promote your book, this is the university
we don't pay.

We'd also like you to give a lecture on your
experiences,

your life and your relationship to your mother,

we want an interview, it will take a day, can you
talk on T.V.

Tell me when do poets work and get paid to be able
to write,

I still have to figure that out.

Poetry is not enough

It's as if writing a good poem
is not hard enough or a miracle
and having a book accepted,
the publisher asks do you know of any grants
for bald poets, Israeli poets, Jewish poets, Moroccan
poets,
Whatever poets, there should be a grant somewhere.
Man, I know nothing of grants, I was always busy
writing the poem, fighting the words, I didn't have
time
for grants, and when I tried it never worked.
Then after the book is out, you need to know how to
lecture
how to talk on T.V. how to promote your book how
to give interviews
how to talk in roundtables, what else, and what the
hell has all this to do with poetry,
nothing, but even less with being a good poet or
writing a good poem.

The Water Closet

"You don't care about
the water closet."
said my wife accusing me as if I were
a war criminal.
"Guilty!" it's true
I have disdained the water closet
not given enough of my time to take care
of the water closet.

It's an important place, it's where I clean
my intestines, I like that, and piss, and
masturbate, and the only place where I can
read a magazine without phone calls (well, almost),
without the kids bothering me, it's a sanctuary.

My dear wife, right you are
from now on I will take care
of the water closet as it was the first
place in which we made love.
(It wasn't, but we had some good sex there too,
long ago, so long ago...)

Cosmic DNA

When she was already crazy
she used to sit by her old father and caress him
for hours, he would think about smoking and cancer
behind her eyes her statuesque beauty sometimes
would flash
as a reminder of all the things that must pass

By night we could hear her screaming like a wolf
then she would disappear to the asylum for days or
weeks
and the week she died from over medication
flashes of her beauty could still be seen
below the open sky,

By now the worms have had it all
eaten the beauty and the madness
the drugs and the flesh, memory still flowing out
somewhere
between Andromeda and the Milky Way
neutrinos of beauty and cosmic DNA
forever her beauty in my memory
as long as I live.

Breasts

Women breasts get cancer from not
being cared for enough, caressed enough
or from being caressed too much
by wrong hands, passing tourists of sex
unable to understand their needs,
or from not feeding enough children
long enough, the milk turns sour,
the memories of unborn children
is stored in muddled kidneys.

The right people

Some people are born into this life
and they know exactly what to do
they know how to be the best pupils in school
how to get the most beautiful girls
and even how to be born in the right families,
it's just like me in front of this computer
composing the lines, choosing the right words,
then they know how to make money
to have the right accountants and lawyers
the right friends they even know how to fill a tax
form
they marry the right women from the right families
and their children look as if they were taken
from a Coca cola ad.

How do they do it? Did they learn something in
their previous lives that I didn't?
It's just amazing.

My first thought

The first deep feeling about this world
was that I wish I weren't born at all
not for fear of living but for having lived too much
too many lives and no conclusion at all
then my thoughts said that if I am alive
the work on this life should be done
as quick as possible (like
finishing a novel, proofreading it and leaving it
on the publisher's desk and then going away)
but cosmic knowledge to which I disagree
disregard my calculations my wish, I hope
they know better I hope all this will be explained
to me, personally, in due time.

X parent

You have good questions my son
but I am a father without answers, my son

You ask me about wars, about tomorrows, my son
But my generation knows nothing about futures, my
son

What's the purpose of war, you ask my son
My father explained it to me my son
But I can't remember one word he said
my son.

we cannot even tell you there will be a world in a
few years
and if it still exists what kind of world it will be

We have headaches my son, we have eternal fatigue
my son
we are tired parents, tired for all those who were
parents before us

We are not afraid of famine, we are not afraid of
epidemics
our fears are that the world will explode before our
eyes any minute

We have no answers my son,
we expect you to make a better world from the
debris we made,
Oh! my son what have we done to your world!

No, we don't pay the poets here

Man... all this poetry business...

we have
a round table for you would you like to come
no this is the university we don't pay
we get paid we don't pay
would you like to save the planet
we have this workshop three days
bring the food, too, no we don't pay
we will also have a three weeks cruise
Peace in the Mediterranean and now
there is this peace congress
in a five stars hotel, people from all over
the world, a great place to promote your writings
haven't you noticed peace is a great business these
days
talk about peace and get funds and more funds
travel tickets for the professors and the housewives
because, as you know, women they make peace
hormonally these days,
and the professors they always made peace,
no we can't pay the poets and the writers,
it's up to you and I understand you don't want to
come
but you have to do everything to promote your
books
says the writer-professor at the other side of the
line,
dear lady, when will I write? I don't have
sabbaticals

I have three children and they eat everyday, I am a
writer
not a promoter of my books, I am not into
marketing,
and I do too much of it already,
yes I understand but I will
talk about your novel and wanted to invite you,
no thanks, prefer to write this poem instead.

Dialogue

Nigh, nigh, the pilot said, the sky's not that high
and god's not that big.

Purple purple, the cat said, this is nothing but a
game,
your turn.

Wrong is a state of mind without a president

If you hide from me and silence
is a state of mind a country full of lakes
a sink full of rats/ noise the lying lions of thunders/
words unsaid become stinking elephants
and your eyes, where do they fall?
Where the glasses smell your cunt
I will not walk, where jellyfishes
smoke your pipe I will not talk/ only
refrain from human beings deciding for others
stay away from lonely machines knowing answers.
This is the country where we met, lady/
but not the country where we were born
where we first met this planet, that's why
we are so far away from ourselves, from our jungles
our angles and our angels who were there to guide
us
in our first steps and tears, our first laughs and fears.

Mission of the poet

If you think you've got the answer I am here to
prove you wrong
if you think you are wrong I am here to prove you
right.

Predictions

Loaves of bread flying over the moon
and you stare at me with one eye
are you there is it me when did he die
when did the bird fall on the tree branch

I predict rains of birds in a full moon
when I was a prophet nothing was clear
people would ask for directions and predictions
but I only had questions, more questions and tears.

"You are loved", she said, now
you can go to bed and sleep.

"loved, ain't it wonderful to be loved
even by someone you don't love?"

"No, not really," the flying bird sang.
He was red and his eyes were blue.

Age

I know I am getting old when I see you
when my feet ache when my back pains
or if not old yet, I know I am not young
when I stare my eyes at the young actress
showing most of her shoulders, reminding me
of you, you used to show more, with grace
and then masturbating thinking about her
and wondering about men who did the same
years ago when I could only see you when
my eyes were dictators of beauty, I know I
am not young anymore when I see the lines
on your face, lines of poetry, not beauty.

The shore of the other

By the border of the sea
between water and sand
my life is born
between salt and water
my eyes turn blue
between shore and sand
my skin glitters
I am the one coming
from the other side of the sea
the other shore
the one which people say it doesn't exist
at the end of the sea
I am the sun that awakens
the sun that sets
I am
the other.

(Thoughts) On Being the judge of a poetry prize

1.

I am the bad guy this time, the one who won't give
the prize
to the real poet, I will skip it, not see his talent or be
blinded by it, then
most prize winners never become great poets,
neither those who don't win
but this time someone will say, he is not even a
good poet, how can he see my talent,
just as I did, just as I did.

2.

Twenty two manuscripts in front of me, and my
goodness, they all write better than I do,
at least in Spanish, how am I going to make it, they
have a better language, a better
knowledge of the syntax, the literary traditions, but,
the hell,
where is life, where love in the lines, where anger,
where light, where life.
It's like every poem is written these days at night
with a candle
where no light comes in, every poem written in
deep obscurity

of the soul.

3.

Man, why are you doing this, the trip to Spain?
respect?
isn't it dangerous, didn't you say so, and why you
who
never won a poetry prize ever, why will you judge,
now, you can see why you never won, you never
did the tricks
of writing well, presentable, catering for judges,
trying to convince them,
you spit on the prizes and contests, and expected to
win.

But, didn't you say a thousand times that a poet
shouldn't deal
with literary establishments, work in publishing
houses, better a slaughterhouse,
better sell bullets than this, and here you are reading
poetry for a living, and
not even such a good one, go sell your cd's instead
of that, man.

4.

Why do we come to this life,
to change it or to accept it?

Light No Shadow

When your tooth breaks down in tears
and millions of stallions fill the air
death is everywhere, death is cheap, death is a good
deal
and your walking thermometer is the face of laugh

activate my account in those smoky rooms
deep in the wild sea, I will show you the way
to more and more tears until you learn to laugh
think of those moments when there was no future

no past, activate my glands in tiny soldiers rooms
drop my lines in garbage cans of golden rings
start reading my poems when darkness is dead

don't talk to me about shadows anymore, I see
them everywhere I go, I not only long for light
without shadows I will get it this time I will.

The Dolphinarium Terrorist Disaster

Most of them were ugly young girls
Death goes better with ugliness
the beautiful today are rich and beauty
is a matter of money, and they died
trying their chances in the discotheque
everyone has the right to try, and they
died before they lived the life of
minimum wage, unwanted children
being exploited or raped, these
terrorists they like the poor
the unwanted, the last pawns
in a war no one calls a war

It's all a matter of words and pictures
If we die young the world is on our side
if we kill the young and helpless the world is
against us
if the world is on our side it "will stop the next
war."

That's Bob Dylan, turned 60, he's a picture on
MTV
older than most of us, younger than we will be,
we don't have the right to die young, we're not good
enough
to die before we live all this everyday life with
mortgages
children to care for, afraid they will die young

and we will feel guilty forever, or dead and
breathing,
before we have to end the month pay bill, write
books
get rejections and publish unnoticed books.

And the dolphins, romantic fishes, TV stars
weren't there to save the young girls
They only save the beautiful stars
in beautiful films. Dolphins go home!

Our old friend is back in town.

European antisemitism is back in town
and as always Mrs. France opened the door
widely
He wasn't here for fifty years
gone underground
but we are happy to announce
he's back again
same and different this time
as always

Great professors question our right
to have a country at all
and accuse us of genocide
cleaning their Vichy conscience with Vichy water

How long now before Jews are killed
and synagogues burned
in old, very old Europe
new clothes on the same leprosy
Mr. Antisemitism is back in town.

The Teachings Of Baraka

1.

I am Baraka
I read your heart
when you read my words

I am Baraka
wherever there is light
there I am

wherever there is war
there I am not.

I am Baraka
I light your way
when you trust me
and lead your way
when you look for me

I live in your soul
since the day
your soul was born
before you were body
before you were sand.

I am Baraka
I am blessing
and the stopping of blessing
I am the light that is too much

to see, when blindness looms in
I dim, when darkness circles
I am light
I am Baraka

I don't come from the past
and I don't seek the future
I am Baraka
I am not
the present

2.
Baraka is good for you
you can spread the word
or spread it on your skin
Baraka is light on your fears

I am Baraka
I am good for you
I am free for you
all you have to do
is touch me with your thoughts
and I come to you
wherever you fight

I am Baraka
a multinational industry
I have the rays you need
the money you will never need
I have the papers on which
you will never write

I have the job of your life
the partner you have been looking for
when you open your arms to me
I am there
I am there forever

3.
Where there is war
Baraka is not
Where there is greed
Baraka is not

Baraka is
poetry
music
silence

Baraka is not
prose
newspapers
television

Baraka
is
Elohim
Yhwh
God

Allah
Dieu
Dios
Deus

Baraka
is the El Shadday
the El who said enough
because the world was too much

I stop when you can't handle me
when too much is too much

4.
When I see the innocent child
I cry
from happiness

When I see the decaying old man
whose skin has been eaten
by greediness
I laugh
from sadness

The world was not meant for decay

That's why I have entered the word
Baraka
will create

lights without shadows
shadows that warm the sun
a moon as yellow
as the deepest ocean
Baraka
is silence
Baraka
is gold.

5.
Baraka supports all the minorities in the world,
Baraka is forever a minority,
Baraka is for the Jews, the Palestinians, Indians,
the Amazighs, The Basques, the Galicians,
the Kurds, the Armenians
wherever a child cries for his lost home
you will find Baraka
wherever someone can't speak his own words
that's where Baraka prays
wherever there are lost poets
Baraka is,
wherever the homeless lives
Baraka is,

Think of me as the foam of the wave

A wave can caress the newborn
A wave can bury a city.

6.

I am Baraka
I live in your kitchens
when the food is made with love
you will not be strangled by food
I live in your apples
and in your rice

When you end your meal
say Baraka
and say it again
Baraka

and your material food
will become spiritual guidance.

7.

Baraka is not in your guns
and not in your tanks
and no matter how much you lie
you can't put Baraka
in your weapons

Baraka is too small and too big
to be there.

8.

Where there is pain
there is longing
and there Baraka is

But Baraka prefers to be
where there is joy
and there is life

where there is love from light
and not love from shadows

Baraka
is there with you
at your darkest hour
when no friend
wants to see you
when your love has left you
Baraka caresses you.

9.

Baraka is simple
as truth should be simple

where people tell you
that their truth is so complex
that you cannot understand it
Baraka is not present

Because Baraka is clear water
no mud will show you the deepness of the ocean
and no cloud can make you see the sun

Baraka is simplicity
when you hear something
and you know
deep inside you
that what you hear is true
then that is Baraka.

10.
I am Baraka
when you eat I clean your table
when your table is empty
I bring you food.

I am Baraka
I teach you
what you already know

that death is impossible
our deeds create it
that life is infinite
our deeds stop it

that there is a flow of life
we cannot stop.

11.

I am Baraka
I break
fast
all that stops my way
to freedom
I despise
those who sell
their freedom
for lentils

I am Baraka
my country
despises
borders.

12.

I am Baraka
I play the piano
like a drunk
but it sounds like Mozart

When you believe in keys
all the doors open.

13.

When Baraka dies
Baraka resurrects
Baraka lives in death
Baraka dies in Life

Nothing can be greener
than the decay
and the dying
of the light.

14.

Remember the neighbor who helped you
when most needed
there I was

Baraka lives when people talk
Baraka laughs when people love
Baraka disappears when there is a fight
He waits in a cave
until the clouds
start to rain.

15.

When Baraka is a painter
he paints
only clouds

clouds change all the time
they have faces and are unknown
they have fingerprints
and the white
changes every second

Baraka changes like a cloud.

16.

Baraka is Jimi Hendrix
Janis Joplin, Van Gogh, John Coltrane,
Gram Parsons, Jim Morrison,
Townes Van Zandt, Lounes Matoub

Baraka lives in them
and their art

17.

Say Baraka
repeat again Baraka
again and again
Baraka
sing Baraka
pray Baraka
dance Baraka
again and again
a thousand times
write Baraka
Baraka
Baraka

Until you see the bottom of the ocean
the top of the sky

Baraka Baraka
Baraka

18

Always forgive
Never forget

All that is buried
comes back

new words
for old atrocities

Old words
for the new oppression.

19.

If you are afraid of death
it is because you are alive

The dead are not afraid of death.

20.

Baraka is not god nor human
Baraka is not substance
Baraka is not nothing

Baraka says:

The woman
in me
will
one day be
the man who can
live
with her.

21.

I can clean the ocean
from its salt
I can stop the rain
and the tears
I can destroy the waves
I am one
in my oneness
one in my
onlyness

one in my
nothingness

There is no end
to my end.

22.
99 steps lead to the door
the key is 66 times
smaller
than the
grave
in which
an old man still alive
shouts
open this door
but no one hears him
the cemetery is deserted

No one hears him
except the black ant
on the black stone
in the black night.

23.
You've lost me
said my friend
I don't know
what you are talking about

It is

I says
because I am lost
but it is also
and more so
because you
are lost.

24.
The lost man seeks solace
in the hand of the master
who is also lost
in the mind of his master
but the lost man
believes in what he finds
he needs a teacher
he believes the teacher exists

Baraka says
there are no teachers
the only teacher is Baraka
and Baraka is you
inside you
outside you
and the life
you have never *leaved*.

25.

Many lives we live in one life
but none the right one
many lives we imagine
should be ours
but none of them
is the real one

I have heard the eagle in the sky
he says the same he said
to our ancestors

he says

I am Baraka
as you are Baraka

I suck blood
from dead bodies.

26.

Baraka does not write in languages
he does not live in tongues
not many and not one
his poetry is the poetry of sound
of words, not of language
his poetry is the poetry of your words
if you can read it
you are Baraka
If you can't Baraka
is not for you
and Baraka urges you

to seek
another teacher

for Baraka is not a teacher
he is only Baraka.

27.
Baraka says:
Don't ask me a question
if you seek the answer within me

ask the question
only if you know the answer
is
within you.

28.
Baraka is the great deceiver
whenever you think
you are seeing him
you are in front of the mirror
when you think
you've heard his voice
he is in another planet
whenever you think
you understand what he said
you are already mad enough
to speak with horses
ask questions
from birds
receive answers from trees

everything on this planet

is talking to you
except Baraka

Baraka is silence.

29.

When despair is everything in your life
there is no more despair
you can laugh at it all
as if you were never born

when everything is lost
everything is won

when you have nothing to lose
you have won

The sky and the sea, the air and the water
is yours
your naked body belongs to the wind
it comes and goes
and goes
and never
comes back.

30.

Baraka is the teacher who cannot teach
Baraka is the teacher
who does not want to teach

Baraka is blind
Baraka is deaf
Baraka is mute

Don't follow Baraka
he doesn't know where to go
Baraka is the fences
not the way
Baraka is the wheel
not the car

If you follow Baraka
you'll find yourself

Don't trust yourself
and trust the others
even less

Baraka is trust.

31.

Listen to the sound of the bird in the garden
of the noisy big city
he's trying to say something he knows
his singing is not for beauty
his singing is a message

from ancient planets
a message
from forgotten gods
a message
from people
who were and hadn't
who weren't and won
who lost and came back

The sound of the bird is Baraka
but Baraka is also the sound of the machines
that dissipate the beauty of the bird.

32.
You have sinned my lord
and we are all clean
You have sinned my lord
and no one can forgive you
we are too busy
asking for
your forgiveness

We are man my lord
human kind
dusty dust, windy wind
we are leaves in autumn
we are the rays of the sun
my lord my lord

Baraka is forgiveness
for sins never sinned

Baraka is the flame and the ray
the water that bleeds
the sound of the wind
in a tornado
the mud when the child walks
the rain when the old man dies

Baraka cries sometimes
but not with tears
he cries the history of the centuries
Baraka cries the past
Baraka cries years.

33.
My son my son
who's your mother?
your father's lost
in crazy centuries
looking for peace
where there is only blood
he looks at the skies
and the skies
are below the ground
he looks at the sea
but the fish
are in the skies

My son, my son
why did you kill your father?
why did your mother run away from you?

My son, my son, you are now alone
the loneliness of god
has become your fate
run from sea to sea
from land to land

running is your country and your family.

34.
Men eat cows/
men raise cows
and they always need more.

Now imagine this/
some other civilization
extraterrestrial
lives from the soul of men
a substance emitted
by the death of people
and they start raising up more people.

Baraka says
a man must be crazy
to think this.

Baraka is crazy.

35.

Baraka speaks with God
when God sleeps
he is afraid of God
when God speaks

He has asked God many questions
the answers
came back to him
through the birds

That's why
Baraka
won't speak
with birds.

36.

Baraka says:
Beware of words
don't use the words
love or truth
lightly
unless
you have seen
what others should
see

Don't say there is no love in this world
for it might
hit you
when less
expected.

37.

Baraka says:
I write poetry
because it is
the closest thing
to
doing nothing

I am a poet
because it
is the closest thing
to being no one

I am a poet
because
I don't exist
someone who must die
cannot exist.

38.

Baraka says:
I am not a wise man
for wise men
in the end of times
don't write poems
and don't even say a word
their only wisdom left
is silence

Baraka knows the world
is ill from too many words
but he can't help

but add his own
He is weak and ill
when it comes to words.

39.
Baraka loves the sea
but does not
trust the sea
he knows that behind every wave
lies a storm
below every fish the memory
of a shark
Baraka knows
a giant wave
bigger than the twin towers
will one day erase his city

but Baraka needs the sea
as much as he needs the sun
and air
and poetry.

40.

The Jews were chosen by God
to carry the stone
of the father and the son
from birth to grave
from dusk to dawn
and light the day
with a match

Jews were chosen
because God is free
to chose
the last to be the first

Baraka says:
So are we,
we can choose the chair
in which we sit
even if it has three legs.

41.

Baraka is the child
beaten by his father
Baraka is God
when his people
look the other way

Baraka is not the child
beating his sister
nor God
destroying
men.

42.

Baraka says:

You cannot burn ashes twice
that's why I don't see evil
where there is light
and that's why
I have closed the doors
on Mephisto and his gang

Once you know you are mortal
you cannot be killed twice

Be free and
talk
from
the bottom of your heart.

43.

Baraka says:

truth should be simple
and clear

clear as the blue
in the skies
in a day without clouds

simple as the whiteness
of the cloud
in a day without skies

When you hear it
you will feel it is
the truth

when you see it
your eyes
should shine.

