

Nacera Mohammedi

Two Poems

[86]

Diving into a Woman's Sorrow

Who will dive into the sorrow of a woman
whose exile paints itself a shade of blue
whose gateways lead to seductions
the size of the Lord's eyes?
Who will steal away the homeland
tattooed into memory
extinguish the lamps of years
forgotten along the heart's way?
Who will break an Andalusian spell
and take me by storm?
Amazement shall blossom like roses
and my heart turn the colour of dreams –
dreams left behind by the prophets
Your face with lights, your face bathed by rain
let the rest of the world burn
The gypsy woman captures an old sailor's songs
and squanders them in the wind
So who said
'Never love a man who loves the sea
... you'll die, either by drowning or by force'
Who said so?
Listen a little to my pain
Weep over my weariness and kiss me
You surround my every pore
so wipe away the signs of my orphanhood
Between your silence and the lines of my palms
I am a wanted woman
Our time hurtles towards the cities of lights
O my forgotten homeland
Forgive me, Birayn
The wounds of the sea stole me away from you



The wind's fury assailed me an ocean ago
 I trickle along the path of a tear
 swaying with the sun's slant
 and remembering that man of mine
 Between his palms and my blood there are poems
 which sorrowful women desire [87]
 In my hair, on his chest
 there are dreams to be shared by the miserable
 dreams as blue as the Danube's sorrows
 They compose the song of the future
 They sketch in the sands of exile
 seasons for love and longing
 Ah ... Forgive me, Birayn
 in my troubles I see your exiled face
 You ask the waves about a fish
 which flirts with travel
 but cannot survive my yearning
 for the soil's liberation, the trees' widowhood
 You are surrounded by the alphabet of my pain
 by the taste of bread dipped in my mother's blood
 her willowy stature,
 her dark complexion smuggled from the Fertile Crescent
 her eyes, where the hardiest sailors plunge
 her heart, which is a continent of tenderness if only you knew.
 Ah ...
 You are surrounded by the alphabet of my pain
 by the shape of sorrow in my father's cloak
 that wounded hawk inhabited by my grandfather's wisdom
 They fought orphanhood with love sharp as a knife
 Love which straddles death
 shatters its stone and springs forth like a prophet
 To all my hurt
 will you listen?
 Shall I open my windows to the sea, and fall silent?
 Teach me to dissolve in the presence of joy
 and be quiet ...
 Lead me to the childhood in things

that I may find solitude and silence
Hold me in your sea eyes
Don't let me perish by drowning or force
Kiss this flame
[88] and draw me back, with your silken threads
to the warmth of Birayn
Oh, who said, 'Never love a man who loves the sea
... you'll die by drowning or by force?'
Who said so?
Who said so? Who said so?

Desert Widow

Time speaks and memory catches fire
telling of souls taking root
in the kingdom of astonishment
of poetry dying on a widow's lips
of a woman abandoned by the city's starry dreams
Snow surrounds her, encloses her aimless evenings
a widow who lives off her own blood
her blossoming body
the pellets of memory tucked into her clothes
her fingertips blaze with feeling
with the light of a dying kiss
a widow touching her breast
exhaling into the flute of pain her long sigh
Eyes pass her by
Barren is the earth
without poetry
without rhyme
What a lover you were desert widow
Final kiss of the gypsy
What a lover you were!

Translated by Seema Atalla

