

# Joumana Haddad

## *Two Poems*

[52]

### *I Don't Remember*

I don't remember  
that I undressed in daylight  
for a man  
whose eyes are closed.

I don't remember  
that I was ever the running saliva,  
he an unattainable desire  
and I ravenous with hunger,  
he an impossible bed  
I the conqueror  
he a resilient city

I don't remember, don't remember  
that I conquered a man like a storm  
and he was the open windows that faced my weakness,  
that I pounced upon him like a fever  
and his hallucinations swallowed my tongue

I knew men's bodies as travel  
and my body as arrival and easy farewell.

I knew that men's hearts are pairs of hands,  
and knew my heart was a promise of asphyxiation  
that remains false even when it wins.

I knew that the arrival of me was a gentle flood  
and their departure a temporary ruin.  
I knew how to forget them even as they stormed the dust of  
memory.

I had never known a man  
whose heart professed rupture like a certain catastrophe.



I never knew a man  
who could turn me  
from an Eve into woman.

*Then I Lost Him*

[53]

He resembles no one:  
I drew him,  
carved him.  
I made him  
then lost him.

I carry his silhouette under my arm at sunset  
and begin searching for him.  
No one knows him.  
I gave birth to him in an hour of desperate revelation  
from a hand resting on my cheek.  
I raised him on easy tears and choicest words.  
He is the ruler of a cursed dam,  
master of an impending earth slide,  
savior of my old covenant and destroyer of all future  
revelations.  
I drew him, carved him, made him.  
Then I lost him.

He has no adversary.  
He has deferred women since the beginning of time,  
singular and numerous like the sex of men,  
but he resembles no one.

He rose from the angles of myth,  
lifted on the wings of ancient disappointments.  
He leaves a land that becomes nations.  
He tosses shells and they become destiny.  
He adorns pain.  
He follows the body with a speechless mouth  
and glories in every utterance.  
He praises at times, and at times denigrates,

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and the gap explodes in tension,  
the shifting sands revolt  
and everything, and everyone that hides under them.

[54]

An unhurried predator,  
he knows he'll win.  
He seals hunger, seals it with one hand,  
and his other hands rove  
deeper than the wellsprings of pleasure,  
further than a defeated desire.

He is the regret that never appears in mirrors  
and the rescue that always arrives late.

Ah, how much pain,  
how much more waiting,  
how many more lying faces  
of a lover who resembles no one!

I drew him, carved him, made him in my imagination  
then lost him between two slumbers.

*Translated by Khaled Mattawa*

