

# Amel Moussa

## *Five Poems*

### *Creatures on the Inside*

[89]

Inside every woman, there is a man.  
Inside every man, there is a woman.  
Inside every language, there is the female and the male.  
Inside every lover, there is a god.  
Inside every sinner, there is an innocent.  
Inside every poet, there is a prophet.  
Inside every prophet, there is a creator and a created.  
Below, there is a sleeping animal.  
Above, there is a caliph sitting cross-legged.  
So, who are all those  
stirring outside?

### *The First Life*

In the countries  
in whose lands roses thrive  
while their creatures dwindle in number,  
the people weep during the holiday seasons.  
Roses remind them of those who have passed on,  
and how each one's blood returned to its first life  
as a rose.

*Translated by Khaled al-Masri*

### *Desires of a Mad Mind*

Whenever these feet dance  
my memory besieges me  
and pants ahead of me  
demanding my dowry

but my dowry  
is a poem:  
the impossible head of death.

[90]

On every journey  
I lose my ring;  
the sapphire stone  
falls

In every migration  
solitude bites my nails,  
and I return crawling.  
My knees carry me  
toward my island.  
I ask the sailor for my ring.  
I search in houses for a pillow  
that holds my mind's desires.

### *Love Me*

I carry me on my fingertips.  
I carry me on the galloping of my vision.  
I wrap myself with a swaddling of my skin.  
I embrace me with longing for myself.  
I bless my flowing, my gushing.  
I cradle me in my chest.  
I glove these budding hands with poetry.  
  
I claim revelation,  
my engravings are on stone.  
My image carries water to thirst,  
and bait to fishermen's nets.  
I spend the tolling of evening bells  
sculpting.  
I sleep in my own shade.  
I wear my Bedouin nature  
to spite cities.



I stroll within me  
when I weary myself.  
I enter a garden  
that does not entice myself against me.  
I love my impossible self,  
the one whose feet  
the earth does not know.

[91]

*Female of Water*

Water did not rush our way  
burning with the ferocity of thirst.

Why does water follow in my tracks  
and forget its channels  
and its flood plains?

Why do I not rest my face  
at the edge of the water  
to know  
how it hid its colour from us,  
how we made it lose its scent?

Why do I not become the secret of water?  
Why do I not become female to its male,  
and wait for him in the jug  
until summer arrives.

*Translated by Khaled Mattawa*