

**SEN İSTANBUL’A ALDIRMA – Arife Kalender**

**NEVER MIND ISTANBUL**

I arrived in the melon field street (Caddebostan) from Malatya

the long air whistle of the road train still lingers in my ear

The Haydarpaşa train station opened its gates to the blue

the gust suits the seagull and so do the fish for the sea

the boat is slipping, and holding the bells to prevent their madness

which color was it when I got silent along with Göztepe

something on my face contradictory to Istanbul

like the mothers who don’t breastfeed their baby

turning down and hurling back

the smell of my hair seems to be dark colored for this city

and my womanhood stands tall on their routes

One pit was burrowed and one pomegranate was split

was it the day when I took one riot for myself

I took poetry instead of a stone, and I got on the tram

I sang trendy songs

I had an adoptive look at the sea

I got shattered between here and there

Madam, is this Istanbul yours

a sultan used to live here

even though the palaces wear out, they can build new ones

a migratory posture on our face

denial, harmony and repetition by the door

they took my identification from my tongue

I petitioned and waited for acceptance

time is over but there are no secretaries

it was the same fisherman, I am sure

with his hair and beard in foam he said

write, in the street of all human beings

death and love wander in the same color

and never mind Istanbul!..

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**OTUN SÖYLEDİKLERİ – Arife KALENDER**

**WHAT THE GRASS HAD TO SAY**

Let us go by using the river not the land

as the birds and belts are on

let irises and willow branches

rub our faces as we swim

our lifesavers are the tree roots

let us hang on to them

I said this but then I backed out of it

look, how my eyes got closed not to see mistreatment

I watch the corpses of children by yawning

an old thorny pain from the times of parka

the god of wishes got worn

he cannot come even though we extend an invitation

whatever is there to turn upside down the sand of the sea

whatever is there is egoist, deserted, coward, feeble

let nobody interfere with it, there is nobody here coming from me

even the grass has got its voice, listen the sound of it, and the crows chat

you’ve got no idea how much I aspire to be a bird-scarer

what I got to learn from my mom all the time

the forcefulness of my father’s tongue

it hits like a ton of bricks on my walls

when the son was taken, his hands tied for torture

pulling triggers by aghas and beys

annoying the life, maybe annihilation of a nation

while the jets are flying over me

my being dark colored caused too many pains

riffles I pointed at the neighborhood are in my memory

I am fearful to kill resembling me

I said, let the other me go

by striking myself repeatedly

let the seas flutter according to their nature

let us go by using the river not the land

the berries would let us remember

what permeated into our skins from the bloodstained shirts

mayday, informing on somebody, committing a suicide

a life had passed, they never changed

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**ORTADOĞULU TANRILAR – Arife KALENDER**

**GODS FROM THE MIDDLE-EAST**

how much of a god is this, how much of an earthquake

the angels born from the dead children

can hardly carry the souls

the spilled blood is not enough for calamity and malignity

the hot iron beatings at the hearts of the mothers

in the hands of the body armored deities

while the mad deer wandering in the nights

in the corners of the pillaged forests

the red eyed wolves are moving around

yesterday I kissed a dead person in my dream

the Arabic letters having turned into a design on his bones

he asked the whereabouts of heaven and waited for a guide

we cannot know, I said, here is the hell all over

I extended a handful of ash out of our fire

The places we worship were far away and in the air

how much of a god is this, how much of an earthquake

the earth cracked and the fire streams on the roads

they said, let nobody should be left for the abyss

they didn’t have their faces, they aimed their guns at our faces

the guns were shining and cold

a mega death when you look out of the window

how come the trees would know about the political science

it is what the whipped branch of a tree during a thunderstorm discovers

the scar forcibly opened by a knife on its trunk

the kid would think it is a toy, do not slap on his head!

the kids would know nothing about the economy of the bread

they call on the tin soldiers to join the game

how much of a god is this, how much of an earthquake

the birds of the burnt flesh and the last breath

going around and around the eaves of the houses

if only a rain would fall, if only a rain would wash this life

if only the height of the grasses would get longer and the sparrows would perch

if only the fire would be put out, and god would disappear!

**Arife Kalender - English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**KİRALIK SAATLER – Arife KALENDER**

I wonder if the gust blows inside me or outside

everything I got used to changes their location

I collected your eyes from a great distance

how on earth I have this toothache, a sleepy dawn

meanwhile a creek flows like a string, ablaze

I keep washing my face on and on

time stuck on my skin does not get out

by seizing on it, I tie the gust with daylight

the horses with their steeply manes rear up

my mistakes and jealousy are at the back of deep inside me

these are my nails, my paws

I add sugar into my voice thinking that it is a decoration

my anger though hits the surface of the water anyway

I wonder if the gust blows inside me or outside

the plumbs are lying and intoxicated till all hours

the unripe winter pear is scarred

such a northeaster, oh my God, it flies the sea

which boat I had taken onto my body as a lifesaver

it rocks between yesterday, in this day and age

the rolled print of the sparrows at the leased hours

it appears and disappears as the gust blows

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**BUGÜNLERDE – Arife KALENDER**

**IN THESE DAYS**

I’ve been falling out of life very frequently in these days

on the rickety and clumsy pavements

blood stains left from the old revolutionaries

then hypocrisy, followed by our image reflected on the water

I come across a strange delight

I believe in lies, all those lies

we never get tired of those lies

even after one thousand times we swallowed

a slice of water melon only just cut

it is red; it is tasty as well as tired

hope is our trap

I suggest that we should cry together

or else break the watch and chuck out calendars!

who knows it may suddenly ring the bell we expect

put some salt in the wound

hiding in the carotid artery of life

in a dried river bed

what we play with the talisman of grass-green and clover

it is an ant; it is a swallow as well as a snake

as we spill the blood of all creatures, as we take their lives

as we walk on the rickety and clumsy pavements

pretending we were a bit of a Shah, a bit of a Sultan

as we were leaving corpses behind on the roads, in death

we recognized the mountain as a mountain, the snow as a snow

how about the pain

we are still griping about

I’ve been falling out of life very frequently in these days

here it is the wound

we can hide it

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**KİMSE KİMSEYLE ÖLMÜYOR – Arife KALENDER**

**NOBODY DIES ALONG WITH OTHERS**

The void is always accompanying me wherever I head for

the running feet from behind propagate

a mouth throwing its voice, a jealous mask

a nose, hair and cocked eyes in a broken mirror

which laughter is being echoed from the walls

filling the rooms when you enter through the door

nothiiiing, nothiiing, nothing, the bell’s buzzing

I seem to be missing the spring all of a sudden

whatever I forgot, all of them look pleasant again

the passenger I expected, the guest I saw off

to my surprise, it puts many things out of sight

my cunning and tight-lipped silence

by feeding the fears having grown its claws in blood

a life having become crooked, tired and old

a broken lynchpin rotates the days

the tongue got stale so did what the tongue had to say

the words had been emptied like the vases which lost their flower

o revolution, now I have no life and no beloved one

I am not a history-lover; do not look at me like this

we sing together with some people, we have wine together

making love from above, a sticky saliva

previously we used to die together in the day time

now nobody dies along with others

nobody dies along with others; the picture is redundant

what bleeds is the finger of a person cut by a piece of glass

the pain belongs to its owner, so does a dead to death

in vain the words are being carved, the meaning is embedded in vain

it is not that deep, its crusts are fallen off

its bottom is seen when the words are torn off

The void is always accompanying me wherever I head for

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**GECE ISLIKLARI – Arife KALENDER**

**NIGHT WHISTLING**

The fingers of a man hardly touched a strand of my hair as if he was caressing

my inner body’s buttons were being gently unbuttoned, a ripple went through me

the wind was howling at the top of the mountain, and the snow was being scattered

knot by knot the road was being opened, a branch of the nawruz festival

it was a new breath under the ant’s shell

it was old Istanbul being a bitch and hypocrite

the summer I ran to you was the Fall when I was leaving you

I was a Gordian knot

Its knot was the summer

I was blind

even the sparrow has got its eyes with many feathers

I was a sultan inside my cove, and basilisk was inside me

the security chiefs at the water head, the security chiefs at the water head

cruelty at the one end of the land

I was sliced thinly, I fell down deep, but I pulled myself together

now I see one thing as two or even maybe as three

they divided me, and I multiplied myself with myself

I have been buried slowly in my poison

I say one thing, I die ten times

I cover my death with letters

several sailing images, a couple of renegade words

I could not bring them all, I poured them into the day

I was a silver ax, facing the sea in Milas

from my other face, a poppy dribbles

it drips red, they broke the red

while passing through the long nights

they were a shadow everywhere, and darkness everywhere

it is love to vibrate the strings, it is love to build a fire

inundant soul, frenzied body and exultant of what we expected

our constantly getting older as we wait

they call out its name, the night whistling

I take a look at the city of never ceasing raining

it was not there; I look for it on the missing persons reports for nothing

the feet taken away by the waters

the saz (a stringed instrument) touched gently the fingers of a man

my life was a passenger talking to its road

somebody called out in naked times, a glass was broken

I heard the sound of your breath running after me

I make up new faces by trimming the old photos

romances turned pale on the walls inside me

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**ESKİ BİR SICAKLIK – Arife KALENDER**

**AN OLD COMMUNITY ATMOSPHERE**

Let it be said that one Istanbul should be left for us

bar room of Anastasia

oh boy, great songs

a man leaving a bay-windowed house, his jacket put askew on the shoulder

burning with the embers of the fire of brazier

accompanied with “I used to love you”

let it be said that one Istanbul should be left for us

somebody on the ascent of the Bab-I Âli (Ottoman Porte)

looking at the chain watch when the shadows rise

sitting side by side with the roughneck

porters with their sweaty cloth caps

alongside with their songs and knives

during the dinner he would not make mention

of Gülpembe’s laughter

dropping from the bells of the seller of grape must

at the lowest ebb, with streams and demolition

let this road lampion stay on the pavement

this tableau, this palanquin

let the neighbor giving bread to neighbor practice survive

greetings of “Good Morning” on the boats, the Maiden Tower, the fortress

let plane trees and September of the plane trees be around

let it be that romances of the summer cinema should be left for us

let the horses with their beaded manes draw phaetons

Let it be said that one Istanbul should be left for us

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**BİR KAYANIN UÇURUMU – Arife KALENDER**

**THE CLIFF OF A ROCK**

I look for a God

who would put life into place

I am a stone of a mountain, I am falling down

my looseness scares the rock beside me

its rain touches me

snowflakes jump over our faces

the cliff, it is also my neighbor’s cliff

our feelings of fear remain together

had I asked the mountain about the direction of life

it bends and asks a tiny pebble where to head for

nobody is alone when they go for dying

the falling rock from the main part of the mountain

takes up its scream from its company

stickmen and stickwomen in the children drawing

a neck, a body as a stick figure and hands are at loose ends

nobody is impeccable, dreams got polluted

they pass by without smelling the linden

they don’t have even their eyes, nobody can see

the purple silent beside the red

the root of the grass urged and the soil moved

you thought the quake inside me would not reach you

the fire hopped and the wind was dispatching the flame

you came after me involuntarily for cruelty

nobody is alone

when a stone is drawing another stone down the cliff

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**17 NUMARALI OTOBÜS – Arife KALENDER**

**BUS #17**

our souls sit side by side

having detained their demons

we are waiting for the bus #17

one of us is a poet

the other is a marathon runner

if we now get on a boat

heading for an old kiosk on the island

I wish mimosa flowers and drooping willow would be prepared

if only the moon would fall down on the sea, and the boat would become loose

desolate from one station to another

if only we would acquire a language spoken between us

#17 did not come

the seagulls passed by scratching the night

your arm touched my arm a short time ago

we wait for traveling and the shadows elongate

my mind is put on the line between us

I had asked about your hell

I saw you are not burning, I kept quiet

have you ever visited the heaven

I went through for a couple of times

over the bridge called love

I hung on to the hold of the bus

I had a talk not with you but it is with you in me

I hanged around for once, I hanged around for the second time

a twig kept moving at my heart

nobody can get to a place other than himself

this was the words of my smartened up child inside me

really, have I bid farewell to you

you, the passenger of the bus #17

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**YAĞMUR SANDIM KENDİMİ – Arife KALENDER**

**I THOUGHT I WAS A RAIN**

the pink of the berry is for me

the cane of sugar, turnip and beet

whatever over there with their roots buried

they draw water from the reservoir inside me

I rained for it, I rained for you

I thought I was a rain

I dropped off from the corner of a leaf

I gathered moisture, I fell down on the earth

I hit the glasses with fingertips

Begonias woke up because of my sound

The kitchen was filled with the smell of food

the patient was dying; the man was drunken

the doves were hidden on the eaves of the houses

we ran on the routes accompanied with the wind

I passed through your land, I was afloat

I was the stream, I turned into a creek, I splashed

my inner body was taking a tongue from your interior tie

a sudden heavy rainfall, very sudden

all of us were wet in the mouth of the same dawn

I was drawing water from the old and new lives

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**ÇELİŞKİ – Arife KALENDER**

**DISCREPANCY**

I use foul language lately very frequently

At the point where anger was chained

One side of me milks silk

On the calm sea during sunset

One side of me is filled with thunderstorms

Crowded with swearing and fights

One side of me is at daggers drawn

One side of is filled with emerald ivies

Both of them are part of me

Love and fight are entangled

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**DÜŞ DÖNÜŞLERİ – Arife KALENDER**

**COMING BACK FROM A DREAM**

I diminished as I rose

My eyes got burnt for what I have seen

This hemlock, lizard and berry

Sometimes I lie down on the sand idly

I move forward on the sun pathway

And sometimes I put a mirror onto the “snow”

From its reflection, there is something

Coming out one by one

I am a petite woman

I left tiny shadows on the asphalt roads

I sent hope to a thousand places, they returned empty-handed

The oak leaves’ rustling in the evenings

Love broke the jugs at the water head

I flared up in a rage

I am a petite woman

My shadows are so tiny

Nobody was expecting from me

To manage such a gigantic love

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**GÖRÜNMEZLE DANS – Arife KALENDER**

**DANCE WITH THE INVISIBLE**

From time to time your image appears

The winter forgets about being the winter

The night throws away its being a night

Then a dance commences with the invisible

How many times you showed off, my face turned into a leaf

Your departure made the snow fall down on my window

I prolonged the dreams

In the gillyflower smelling rooms

Let the moon stay put nearby

Let the sun not rise, and let it wait behind the mountain

I adore the rain

Mid-afternoon, linden, the yellow color of the eyes

My fingertips are painted with the walnut henna

Where the black holds on to the green

What number the symphony is this, let the curtail fall!

You know you can come without a gate or frame

You – is that you, where are you?

This poppy red doesn’t come from you

In my very deep self, I fabricated a lover dressed as you

Bird-insect-air-water

Hold on to your image

As long as I have this big heart

It doesn’t matter whether you exist or not

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**KIRMIZI FİRARİ – Arife KALENDER**

**THE RED FUGITIVE**

I am a red fugitive

having stolen a horse from an image

I was born into someone

who is wanted with batting order in bulletins

I could be killed at any time

The footprints on the corpse of the sunlight

I gather that granite stones can bend and crumble

the stone too has its song tune

the sun sets, the moon dangles from the clouds

now I am in the land of carnations

In my bosom, the blood smelling knives

tardy hastiness, a complete love, a full wind

I am a friend of the world and a murderer killing myself

I am rebellious, I hold a cane being the brightness of the words

Sometimes the king of the words

Some other times the slave of the words

O Phoenix, you are the bird risen from your ashes

I came here to give birth to realities from foams

the water flows, the leaf gets rotten, the grasses germinate

I give up on new romances and old death

For a long time now, for a long time

I am stuck at the hour of the rise and fall of the waters

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**YALNIZ MI – Arife KALENDER**

**ALONE?**

Am I alone hereby

as I watch a night single-handedly

First you walk in

then the others who came with you

friends and foes altogether

everything and everybody seems to be here

The humming of a chorus

hits the walls

time stops, there is no place

when your face fades, others appear

Am I alone hereby

in the middle of this much crowd

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**YAĞMUR ORMANLARI – Arife KALENDER**

**RAINFORESTS**

Today I feel I am too much for myself to bear

take a bit of me

blind romances led the mansions tour

udis (lute players) were asleep, neyzens (flute players) silent

I was a belly dancer, I made love with my dances

shawl, tambourine and wine

everybody’s winter produces snow for them only

I am building passages out of melting

at one end my song is hiding

at the other end your saz (stringed instrument)

breaks the string while going crazy

Today I feel I am too much for myself to bear

take a bit of me

my neighbor brought some desert

the old sections of the narrow streets

a ship passing through the strait, fully laden

by wiping its steamed glasses with their hands

the passengers are looking at the city, a remnant of loot

ask a land a name so that it could find out about its geography

a tree in rainforests cannot speak its mind

having our roots burnt and our leaves feeling cold

the rain, and dropping it from the thin and long branches

all of these were left to the weeping willows

Today I feel I am too much for myself to bear

take a bit of me

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**İKİ NEHİR KAVŞAĞI – Arife KALENDER**

**THE CONFLUX OF THE TWO RIVERS**

Both were women – Fatma and Meryem

they had their menstrual stoppage, their hearts in pain

they caressed their bellies with their fingers

right after they calculated their blood day in a hidden corner

womanhood means getting prepared for pains

there were no lights of history, they gave birth without pictures

they nailed Jesus’ palms on the cross

Meryem had talks with the fetus inside her body

she completely remembered all those for nine months

when devils were sharpening their swords in the night

Fatma mentioned the knife stabbed on the back of her man

the pain went crazy, and darkness howled for a long time

she made a wish from a stone, tied rags to the tree, threw incense to the water

she could not have taken her sons from the enemy’s hands

two women at the conflux of the two rivers

the waters got silent, time stopped without any response

the daggers that have become blunt for centuries

who were the ones continuously rubbing silky skins

the first bullet of the wars

touches a mother first

the body comes to bits with the sound of the first bomb

I am *Arife*, born as Fatma and Meryem in terms of records

do not let the wars touch my roses

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended: Collected Poems I”)

**DELİ BAL – Arife KALENDER**

**MAD HONEY**

“Mecnun (love-crazed man) is raised in the land of willow Leylâ (Mecnun’s lover)”

Sheikh Galip

I used to be one leylâ; out of a thousand men

I created so many mecnuns (love-crazed men)

time of death was me, elixir was me, houri was me

curiosity is my friend; fire is a pain in my soul

I used to be life to the eye and the meaning to the blind

they found out the places of my solitude where I hid

my rebellious beasts in the domicile rooms

they are asleep unaware of my deluge

I flew high, I acted tactlessly, I was mad

the beauty turned into the ugly, my whites into tattletale gray

I filled my honeycomb with the winter whistling

I perched on the cobra flower

I freed myself from the bird raids and bear claw

without noticing the poison of honey, they tasted its sherbet

I used to be a bee, I used to knead hemlock with sugar

They recover health by using a morsel of it, but they fail again

whimpers are heard in the new nights of the moon

I expected a call of help from the words

I glazed my honeycomb with the tongue

I posed questions to mystery

malice of poetry is sleeping in the bosom of melancholy

I used to be one leylâ; out of a thousand men

I created so many mecnuns (love-crazed men)

mad honey, mad honey

it is hoped that

healing comes from honey

and madness from a crazy head

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol -** (Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

**HER AYIP YAKINIMDIR – Arife KALENDER**

**ALL SHAMES ARE MY CLOSE FRIENDS**

I am the gate of the hell, do walk in

get to know my tunnels, find out about the secrets

demons of the hell waiting with a bad-temper of the sherbet

miserable you; you as a public fountain; you are a scrap person

they will throw you at the embers of my body

come to the fight and murder along with your blindness

organize your dreams, you may start with my hair

my hands and feet are in such a bad shape

pretty them up, justify them for love

let me perch on a line and wrap me with letters

o the gruesome murmur of the underground waters

think that it is a sleeping cat, a non-poisonous snake

a voluntary body for your weakness, a tree without a wind

dye it in one color then create a goddess out of it

I am a roamer, all shames are my close friends

I freed myself, the chain was broken

a spear, soot, sand and storm

torn bridal veil, slipping land, a dimming down lamp

I am a bat; my lips shall be death on your skin

o the son of wisdom, you are the sultan

your demon is inside my body, the rope and the knife

the hands of lust are also the hands of hatred

first we are far away because of betrayal, blinded with a red-hot iron

dragon inside us shall come out later on

I am the gate of the hell, do walk in

draw my face, identify me

I sketched you on myself

we are beyond the city walls, on the threshold of leprosy

we used to be clean… We got dirty, and love is dirty

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

**AŞK DA YORULUR – Arife KALENDER**

**EVEN LOVE GETS TIRED**

is this bar room crowded with you all of a sudden

was it you to bring the sea from the old bays

you knee touches my knee, raki glasses are cloudy

charcoal drawing of love portraits on our face

we are looking at the fish skeletons on our plates

after listening to violinist Itri, we become blear-eyed

and when we leave we are tired, struck by a blizzard and sleepless

without showing you, I stole a spark from your eyes

this is the sound of fire; I can sense it from its kindling

the glimmering of the flames hits the glasses

in this bar room there used not to be the bird calls in the past

was it you to have opened all the cage doors

your wing sits on my wing; we are silent

is this bar room crowded with you all of a sudden

does the water increase the volume of its sound along with you

then I became a butterfly, then a matador from Genoese

you wrapped very thin women with your pelerine

they buried all of your kissing in the seaweeds by the lake

I brought those cute sketches, look this is your loneliness

why otherwise should I tremble because of the smell of your beard

as your hand touches my hand, the fiber gets hot on the fiber

I am unable to cope with so many colors, the red gets rotten

my northeasterly winds come down the city when you are absent

the wolves bite my loneliness

I start stealing songs, look! I warn you beforehand

how come I can hide the whish caused by my hands touching your hands

even love gets tired because of visiting so many bodies

your voice knocks at the door of my soul

love gathers speeds from the heart’s propeller turned into a wheel

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

**SİLAHIMI BIRAKTIM – Arife KALENDER**

**I LAID DOWN MY ARMS**

To C. Süreya

I took out my virginity and put it on the table

a child with a curly hair on one side of the river

and a woman on the other side were waiting

like a gunfighter gets tired of his shield

because he has to sleep with his gun out of fear

I was fed up with my virginity

a suitor bird is going to acquire a taste of my treasure

embellished words, auctions

lies for the property in my body

he would think that he is a sultan

in between my childhood and womanhood

my virginity was there surrounded by men-at-arms

I took out my virginity and put it on the table

my soul was not being deceived by their orders

on honor with their hands holding the lashes

and by Cemal Süreya’s provocations

I didn’t save it neither for my husband nor I presented it to my love as a target

an old sword was staying in my body rustily

holy virgins are bewildered

while the men-at-arms keep guard

a hungry and predatory animal was howling

on my belt to turn my soul into a mangle

hey revenge, hey mad honey

the bloody knife many girls put their heads on it

nobody can claim any right over my body

nothing can take it from me except love

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

**TANRIYLA KONUŞMALAR**

**I**

**TALKS WITH GOD**

**I**

I was too much scared of the sins

till I became a sinner

I committed adultery, I was holding on my lap a swaddled child

I fell in love, I don’t care about the laws and virtues

even the time of death comes, it cannot deter me from worshipping that man

kowtow to him, a breath to him, whims to him

the night starts with him, the most dawns with him

with my teeth I gnawed my handcuffs

o god you did not burn the bridges

it was me who stroke the match and set fire to the mind

I personally created love with coquetry and wiles

you got it separate from your name, you let it free on its way

give reply to my voice or else the questions would feel ashamed

wasn’t love spoiled by you

who was it to show to my eyes the beauty and the ugly

I was bunt and frozen in nights, call for help was for you

I waited out of breath, and I hid volcanos

a bed of nails on my body, and diabolical whispers on my skin

this land was not bigger than love

first order starts to read “love”

I complied and I rhymed my body

my heart was inoculated to a man

I forgot all the letters I read

impure subjects at the gate of a dirty heaven

they know that from the first to the last order

heaven tests itself with the hell of love

I was too much scared of the sins

till I became a sinner

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

**FIRAT – Arife KALENDER**

**THE EUPHRATES**

Hey, ye, hey, ye, ye eee

I am not water, lean and look at

I am not water

dig up my belly, open my chest, and search for

I memorized so many romances and so many deaths

I am not only water, lean and look at it

I cleansed the blood with the sand and the rock

I breastfed antelope, partridge, and I hid bandits

in every drop from me, the grand time whispers

sometimes in the bosom of the plains glittering silently

sometimes muttering with ground noise in the deep abyss

I was flowing by going red and gray

you see that I went mad

my creeks gather news items to meet with a stream

they drag and drop life, they mix with my water

what’s there, a joyful wedding but frequent wars

I flow, I am not as deaf as a post

it stays in my mud, in the soil of my bottom

screams, masses of bodies, a non-stop lament

Hey, ye, ye, ye eee, hey

I am not only a water

I am history

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “the Turkish Epic: Seven Climates Four Seasons”)

**LACİVERT ADAM – Arife KALENDER**

**NAVY BLUE MAN**

I installed a hand on my eyes

my hands

kept wandering inside your hair

some people are talking and talking

fog shadow noise

I took notice suddenly amongst so many voices

I am tasting your voice

time spent some time between us

who slept in our arms

now you are the one I don’t know, I am asking

why aren’t you taking leave of me

I can call a city by your name

you know about that

I can call a sea by your name

you cannot fit into your bed, your mattress is an earthquake

by just mentioning you

I am throwing two pebbles into the sea

what made your blue color depleted

where does the anger of the waves come from

aren’t I aware of what muddies the water up

I installed a hand on my eyes

I caressed your hair from a distance

I took you as history and that’s why I am so out of the way

do you think all of these bruises are caused by you

the dream got polluted, the water and the day got tired

you voice kept calling out a lost romance

I asked about your secret, I stopped you in me

the tradition of womanhood is distant to caressing

I saw you and I stripped you to the buff

you became my son in wars, and you were laid off while on strike

your name is eccentric and your shadow looks dark

all of your loneliness was also mine

the navy blue man, the Marmara goes crazy by my side

can you hear the clatter of the pebbles

**Arife Kalender - English Translation by Mesut Şenol** (Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

**GÜLÜN GÜRÜLTÜSÜ – Arife KALENDER**

**THE NOISE OF THE ROSE**

I woke up to the noise of the rose

who tidies up the dispersed sky

who hanged the sun before the sky

in order to go together with life

hope is just only a shadow

while we were asleep they stole the blue color bit by bit

some people bring them and put them in their own places

every color has their own territory

if asked I’d say I am the citizen of the blue

in the past I used to be a meadow made out of children smile

I forgot about my shape, how do I look at the moment

this longing has started recently in me

one part of it is you, everybody knows that

I am tired of my name, please let me become you for a while

we get up every morning, under the same time frame

from the same door of the night

bang bang bang the birds were fallen down

the deaf words make up a heavy sentence

the meanings dump their loading into the cliff

is it here a steppe, the trains hurt

they take things from us

flesh, bone, quill or feather, whatever

have you also woken up, o lizard

let us go out, we are naked anyway

let them think that our rage is a bandit

a jelali\* waits inside me

sometimes I became a man, oh, sowing is so difficult

if I were rational, I would have been a weed in the lakes, or a straw

even a squirrel can guard its walnut

we had a faith in love, we had a faith in love

every day it used to drop two feathers by the door

the color of red dangles from the letters of name

this is the noise of the rose

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

a jelali\*: a rebellion against the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries

**SUSAMAK ZAMANLARI – I – Arife KALENDER**

**THE TIMES OF THIRST – I**

Open up the well holes

the snakes of cruelty wiggle

whose names were drowned in the mud

the vulture is sitting on their flesh wounds

it is the picture of a broken caravan

one drop of water in your eyes

they called out for the jugs sitting in deep bottom

no wine brought satisfaction, neither did the holy spring

looking for is thirst

it imagined that wilderness is the lover

human being is being burnt

open up the well holes

wrap the writing up with papyruses

ask for the mummy of the baby, explain it in Arabic

a tradesman in Sur, hanging gardens of Babylon

become a crane convoy along the river

let them call you with so many names

lie down on a bed of nails

wear down the days, and sleep in nothingness

we would die our eyes open

nobody can see we are thirsty

the longing melts and goes underground

the water inside the snow

gripes the river quietly

there a moment within time

distinction in our essence, a deluge in our heart

and we say I swear I won’t forget

but we forget it because of the haste for other moments

it waits in the lake but it couldn’t be perceived

even one drop of rain is too much for our spirit

our tears overflow and cannot fit into the vein

it is the fight of labor

sweat comes out of skin

it demands a price for the work of arm

these screams are the legacy left from the oldest slave

with a rage of saying I would not leave unpunished

the absence of home as we say I missed you

the hope of the hope from mornings

this is it, water

it emanates from our interior

though our exterior is dry

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Night Whistling”)

**AHLARIN ŞİİRİ – Arife KALENDER**

**A POEM OF SIGHING**

its name is not grief nor a rebellion, ahhh!

can a city collapse so suddenly

it collapsed though, the castle, tower and city walls

as if we have not passed via this route

while our hands were being withdrawn from our hands

it was not us becoming less

from a dropping bucket of a swinging winding wheel

hitting the walls of the moist darkness of a huge well hole

should I cry

it has been ages; my eyes must have forgotten

a bit of salt, a very deep sigh

falling down non-stop on the pain

then again, then again

the warning signs of the railroads

or transformers with the sign of death

can the pirate with a name of love

can he fool life

it can disperse the memories with a speed of wind

discover the trees, the leaves and the Autumn

you like the sea, and today I called it

I called the waves, the sand, the seaweeds

I walked the rain, I gathered moisture

who is going to recognize the sound of your steps except me

here you are in front of me, an acquaintance from afar

save me from you where I was embedded

either you throw me away like a pulled tooth

or you integrate me into your existence

it is not grief nor a rebellion, ahhh!

there is no glass nor your face looking from a showcase

our getting thinner was broken, all in bits

come and take this Istanbul, let me get rid of it

so many doors are being opened and closed

Bostancı\* gets tired of the song of my inner world

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Night Whistling”) - Bostancı\*: The name of a neighborhood in Istanbul

**TERZİNİN ŞİİRİ – Arife KALENDER**

**THE POEM OF THE TAILOR**

They told me to be the reverse side of fabric

let your color be pale and the patterns vague

the reverse side of fabric is also the reverse of life

be a dead person, but they should not see your red

they said so but I did not pay attention, I was a rigid material

I took the scissors, I turned my reverse into the right side, tacked it with the blue

does love fit into cloths, I did blind stitch work

while singer machine was sewing holiday clothes inside me

I absently pricked my finger

I had modelled my soul beforehand

I thought maybe it would not fit into the daylight I live in

I slashed in order to get the body to breathe

I tailored deep low-cut, I fell into sin

the daisy was drinking water at that moment from the thread of fabric

coming off from different combs of the looms

some are of plain American, some are of Persian

some are of printed cloth, some Kashmir or fustian

I recognized you from your smell, texture and posture

I measured my body, I adjusted myself according to your size

I figured it out later that I cut out it wrongly

I was a novice tailor on those days

what is staying in the wardrobe is the dress I don’t wear

I made an underskirt out of memories

let them not see me exposed

with the light coming from the sooty firewood, lamp with wick

wasn’t it us to exchange two souls with a baby

whatever we would put on, they would befit, red or ginger

the dresses used to be silky skin touch

I am a tailor inside a covered bazaar

the weaving changed, the design too changed

my texture is known; I am made out of words

I measure sounds and I cut syllables

the needles and threads are running like clockwork

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**KADIN GİTTİ – Arife KALENDER**

**THE WOMAN HAS GONE**

The woman has gone

…….

The bed is in a mess

she forgot her hand on the kitchen counter

menstruation pains, dirty water, stale lipstick

she thought they would diminish in time

but her laments are still in the same place

she took along her darkness she dyed yellow

and the purpleness of her cheek

…….

The man is perplexed like a weaned baby

he scratches his beard in the middle of the lounge

the sand dunes at home piled up by the storms

vipers inside it, a plate thrown during a feud

it requires somebody to pick thing up, a soup with thyme, a piece of meat…

he searches the other like a sock looking for its pair

his tie wasn’t done up properly, his eyes are bulging

the routes became entangled, who is going to make them straight

in the rooms of coastal untidiness with the subsided northerly wind

…….

The woman has gone

…….

Empty water bottles, half full glass of wine

tartarated reds, maroon time

a boat gives a kick to an apple on the ground

the apple used to be an apple, Eve used to be an Eve

…….

there was the name of lying down side by side, the warmth on your lips

the blood having lost its enthusiasm flows slowly in the veins

the man pulls the thread of the knitting, unraveling continuously

on his untouched body there are virgin columns

milk and blood… An orchard with the smell of fresh grass

dew and sweat… day after they are not fresh anymore

…….

The woman has gone

…….

By leaving her movable desires at immovables

making love with rage... revenge and sin

the long eyelashes of the man, inside the forests of his chest

his arms are scissors; he would make her out of breath

stop here, stop, they may see it… Let them see it

while the horses of lust with foam at the mouth rear up

how many knives’ mouths were those of betrayals

…….

The woman has gone

…….

She went away taking her forgiven ties

if only you took a look… No, let her not look, he cannot recognize

without opening the windless glass door between the bodies

the bodies become the same, the dusty breath of the beds

he would have entered the same door without flowers

if only time went back to its starting point, if only love returns

her man, her man of those Saturdays

if only they would not get out of the bed and the mattress would not at all get cold

if only they would have been around without names, without signatures and without writings

…….

The woman has gone

The man is a novice

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

**DOSTA DÜŞMANA KARŞI – Arife KALENDER**

**IN THE EYES OF EVERYBODY**

Let your heart has got its green all the time

To give to your friend

To show to your foe

People don’t have the same integrity

And there are scavengers of life

Put honey, put salt and put a knife into their pockets

Honey for a friend

Salt for the blood

How about a knife?

Do not forget

When you use the knife

Everything

Shall become your hand, your belly and your tongue

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “The Rose Was Offended – Collected Poems I”)

**YEDİ İKLİM DÖRT MEVSİM TÜRKİYE DESTANINDAN BİR BÖLÜM – Arife KALENDER**

**A SECTION FROM THE TURKISH EPIC: SEVEN CLIMATES FOUR SEASONS**

We ran into Urartians, we drank ayran from an earthenware pot

our gods are different; our lives though are the same

we introduced what we knew and we received that they knew

we got to know caravans and innkeepers on the caravan routes

the boydan clan is on their way to cover a long distance

we built villages, towns

some of us followed the plough in their land

some of us, again forward towards the south and the north

we waved to one another, we agreed together, again we turned into nomads

the wind conveying the sound of the mountain to the mountain

special delivery, a fast one, in a short span of time

It passed by the Ararat to reach later the Mount Suphan

even before catching its breath

to Palandoken, Karagol and to Munzur from there

its order was being heard, it was being read from one stone to another stone

small mountains bent

and the hills got silent with respect

- let the snow not release its belly from the back of the rocks

let the water not go mad in its bed, let it wait for the storm

the mountains are not the grim reaper for wolves, birds and humans

the child on our laps, and the toy on our knees

by stretching *by rows* towards the bread like ants

in great numbers on the land like the lambs

humans on our heads, on our skirts, on our skins

we wish they could go through the narrow passages, and reproduce the offspring

we also wish the burden would be decreased from one person to another

if only their mind would be healthy and their heart would be beating for love

the mountain appreciated the other mountain, the grass the other grass, the horses whinnied

the eagle owl called, the rooster crowed, the dog howled

this was the order

a woman heard them, it is women who can hear them first

the order of the wind, darkness and the fire

the woman turned her face towards the Mountain Nemrut

she called out Süthan, Sultan

- I am a mother, I am a woman, only you could understand that

you keep the volcano inside you, your face is the picture of the stone

it was me who raised meadows wherever I move

thread from the wool, clothes from the thread, felt for the ground, a thick garment against the wind

who can sober down the mad, and tame the wild

who can make yoghurt from milk and harvest ears of grain from the crop

who can bring the talk to the tongue and have the baby speak

who can spot the right herb, right oil and even right insect to treat the sick

who can build pots from the mud and the wall from the stones

I started life, life perpetuates with me

they were outside, they were shepherds, they were soldiers

I was inside, these eyes looked at the exterior from inside

at the future from the past, they got perplexed, we received

the Mount Suphan order of these mountains, we surrendered to fate

the others made their mind, to kill and to be killed

that means the ones who are outside, that means the men-at-arms

I am a woman; the skin is not a stranger to me

you would hide three iced lakes above your head

do you have the pain of three sons, rising smoke in rings

you would collect snow in the sun, or a lament from stormy valleys

the grieved mountains with their top housing several lakes

those mountains tear down their possessions and felling their trees

**Arife Kalender**

**English Translation by Mesut Şenol**

(Taken from “Guilty Thunderstorms: Collected Poems II”)

ARİFE KALENDER

She was born in Ermişli village of Arguvan district, Malatya in 1954. After having gone to the last year of the high school in the province she was born, Arife Kalender graduated from the Istanbul Fenerbahçe High School. Upon her graduation from the School of Foreign Languages, Istanbul University in 1977, she was appointed as a German language teacher at Kadıköy Anatolian Junior High School; then later at Kadıköy Anatolian High School. She has served for many years as a teacher and administrator. In 1997, she earned her retirement from her teaching profession.

Her first poems were published in the local magazines and newspapers in Malatya followed by her poetry appearance in 1970s in the literary magazine called “*Yansıma - Reflection*”. Her first poetry book is entitled “*Maviler de Eskidi - The Blue Colored Ones Got Also Old*” published by Cem Publishing House in 1992.

Besides her own poems, she translated poems from the following poets*: Erich Fried, Gerhard Hauptmann, Georg Trakl, Ulla Hahn, Rose Auslander, Else Lasker Schüler, Mascha Kaleko, Albert Ehrenstein, Erich Keastner,* and *Hilde Domin*. She analyzed around thirty Turkish poetry masters and these research works, which were published as an extended version by Kaynak Publishing House under the name of “*Poetry Islands*”, have met with the readers.

Arife Kalender had served between 1997 and 2001 as the Secretary General and the Board Member of the Turkish PEN Writers Association. Being one of the founding members of the BESAM (the Professional Association of Scientific and Literary Work Owners) and Nâzım Hikmet Foundation, Arife Kalender had been a board member and the Vice-President of BESAM between 2002 and 2007. She attended the International Struga Arts Festival in 2000. Her 3rd poetry collection called “*Suskun Resimler Durağı - The Station of the Silent Paintings*” was rewarded with “Behçet Aysan Prize” organized by the Turkish Medical Association. Her 7th poetry book “*Deli Bal - Mad Honey*” brought to her 2005 Orhan Murat Arıburnu Prize. She writes about poetry and education. Arife Kalender translates literary works from German. Between 2007 and 2009 she had served as the Secretary General and the Board Member of the Turkish Writers Syndicate. She contributed to around twenty books and anthologies with her writings. In recent years she has been writing on the field of children literature. She continues to write poetry and to do translation.

**PUBLISHED BOOKS OF ARİFE KALENDER:**

1. “*Maviler de Eskidi – The Blue Colored Ones Got Also Old*”, Poetry, Cem Publishing House, 1992

2. “*Göçebe Sevinçler – Nomadic Joy*”, Poetry, Cem Publishing House, 1994

3. “*Suskun Resimler Durağı – The Station of the Silent Paintings*”, Poetry, Hera Poetry, 1995

4. “*Gül Küstü – The Rose Was Offended*”, Poetry, Hera Poetry, 1997

5. “*Kırmızı Firari – The Red Fugitive*”, Poetry, Cem Publishing House, 1999

6. “*Kadın Burcu – Woman’s Horoscope*”, Poetry, Hera Poetry, 2001

7. “*Deli Bal – Mad Honey*”, Poetry, Phoenix Publishing House, 2004

8. “*Şiir Irmakları – The Poetry Rivers*”, Review Essay, Phoenix Publishing House, 2005

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10. “*Dil Altı – Sub Lingual*”, Poetry, Cem Publishing House, 2009

11. “*Bendeki Malatya – Malatya in Me”, Autobiographical City Book*, Heyemola Publishing House, 2010

12. “*Suçlu Fırtınalar – Guilty Storms*”, Poetry, İlya Publishing House, 2011

13. “*Toplu Şiirler I / Gül Küstü – the Collected Poems I / The Rose Was Offended*”, İlya Publishing House, 2011

14. “*Toplu Şiirler II / Suçlu Fırtınalar – the Collected Poems II / Guilty Storms*”, İlya Publishing House, 2011

15. “*Kuşlar Geçiyor – Birds Are Passing By*”, Children Poetry, BenceKitap Publishing House, 2012

16. “*Deren’in Şarkıları – Deren’s Songs*”, Children Poetry, BenceKitap Publishing House, 2012

17. “*Mehmethan’ın Rüyası – The Dream of Mehmethan*”, Children Short Story, Nezih-Er Publishing House, 2014

18. “*Gece Islıkları – Night Whistling*”, Poetry, Tekin Publishing House, 2014

19. “*Acı Yeşil – Hot Green*”, Poetry, Tekin Publishing House, 2014

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22. “*Dört İsmail Bir Leyla – Four İsmails and One Leyla*”, Short Story, Tekin Publishin House, 2017 (ÇYD Türkan Saylan Prize)

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24. “*Sonra – Later on*”, Short Story, Tekin Publishing House, 2017

25. “*Yağmur Sandım Kendimi – I Thought I was a Rain*”, Poetry, Tekin Publishing House, 2017

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