



### 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**

NEKOPIRATI

**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**

NEKOPIRATI

**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  
nothiiiiing, nothiiiiing, 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 curtain 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 FİRARI – 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 Ittri, 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”)

**LACIVERT 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")

## 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 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries

NEKOPIRATI

**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”)

NEKOPIRATI

**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 Schöler, Mascha Kaleko, Albert Ehrenstein, Erich Keatner, 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:**

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4. "Gül Küstü – The Rose Was Offended", Poetry, Hera Poetry, 1997
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7. "Deli Bal – Mad Honey", Poetry, Phoenix Publishing House, 2004
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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
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23. "Mehmethan Pazarda – Mehmethan is in the Market", Children Short Story, Nezih-Er Publishing House, 2017
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