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**Muniam Alfaker**

**“A cloud in flight”**

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## **I. Iraq in stillness**

### **To build a home**

*One day i shall  
Take a bit of sand,  
Take a few herbs.  
Take a little water  
And thousands of kilometers of barbed wire.  
This is how I shall make myself a home.  
Shall i call it "Iraq"?*

### **Soldier**

*He was not so soft  
That he could be bended,  
He was not so tough  
That he could be broken.  
He floated around  
In his empty loneliness.  
During his first leave  
He came home by bus.  
On his third leave  
He came in a box.*

...

*You cannot make  
My mouth into  
A prison cell,  
Where my tongue  
Is locked up  
For a lifetime*

...

*How many times  
have i put on trousers  
that were not mine.  
and shirts  
that were not mine.  
How many times  
have I wandered on streets  
that were not my streets  
and lived through days  
that were not my days.*

## **Pain**

*Had the pain been  
white  
we would have painted the houses  
and decorated the livingrooms  
with it.  
But since the pain was black  
we put it away  
in the lowermost drawers  
of the heart.*

## **Fall**

*His body was wagon  
his feet the horse.  
The wagen rolls  
And the horse succumbs.*

## **A mother`s sleep**

*The sun has left us all withered  
the moon slumbers at he rooftop.  
My beloved has yet to comb  
her hair.  
I have not shaved myself.  
My beloved mother  
still sleeps.*

## **Grandfather**

*the sun  
climbs up to  
the sky*

*the short hedge  
casts a low shadow*

*on the chair  
sits my grand*

*the sun  
climbs up to  
the sky*

*the short hedge  
casts a low shadow*

*on the chair  
dust*

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## **A family**

*In the morning:*

*a cup of coffee  
partaken between the cheese and olives  
The breakfast table is enriched  
by their hands.*

*When the father was about to go,  
the boy asked for some chocolate,  
the mother asked for a kiss,  
and the father said: "I'll come home  
tonight"*

*That night:*

*The boy sits out in the porch,  
the mother is in the kitchen,  
father is in the morgue.*

## **A cloud**

*Amidst this heat wave  
a cloud, on flight, alighted  
from its own sky.  
It bored trough the vertebra of the afternoon`s hour of rest.  
Then my mother cried.*

## **Childhood**

*On the way to the farmyard  
my childhood rains down  
upon me.*

*The earth absorbs it all up.*

## **The house**

*The house does not take a stroll along the garden  
nor does it go the cinema,  
but it  
sleeps  
with all its furnishings  
within me  
in order to break  
my spirit*

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## II. Visions on water

### Visions on water

*Should you place  
Aall mirrors behind in the darkness,  
and the paint all glassworks  
black,  
and you banish all combs  
to their deaths,  
and forbid eyes  
to see other eyes,  
and take away the vision  
on the water  
would`nt the face  
rebel,  
and the hair resist?*

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## **Salima**

*Against the cold,  
she brings forth fire*

*in the heat  
she comes with ice*

*in the sorrow  
she comes alone,*

*And the joy,  
she shares with all of us.*

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## **The wait**

*When he had waited  
One hour, two hours  
and she had`nt yet turned up,  
He gently put his cheek  
Towards the bench and said,  
“Bench, do we see each other again  
Tomorrow, same place?”*

...

*And the lock said to the key  
(which had been turned twice around):  
You are useless without me!  
And the key replied:  
Same to you!*

...

*All your sounds  
will not transform you  
Into a perceptible word.  
I have loved you  
In silence.*

## **Reiteration**

*I reiterate myself  
at the table,  
and say what I have said  
yesterday.  
I have only a broken pencil  
and some paper,  
refugees from the routine that  
imprisons.*

## **A key**

*For 30 years  
I have searched for a key  
Of gold,  
Of silver,  
Even of plastic,  
To all the closed door inside of me.*

## **Gladness**

*Me feet!  
Walk ahead of me!  
While i linger  
behind just a little  
To cast away  
the heart`s old fears.*

...

*In the desert of love  
your heart  
will lead you to my well.  
You shall drink  
the darkness.*

**Stillness**

*A clearing  
silently lifts up the curtains  
and lets the light in  
... into stillness*

...

...

*Stillness  
is the conversation of objects.*

## **Liaison**

*Breeze,  
with your soft scarf  
You dried away my tears away  
and lulled me to sleep.*

*Breeze,  
for your sake  
I threw me doors ajar  
and opened all my windows.*

*Breeze,  
please do not stuff away my candles.*

...

*I know now:  
It was in the garden that i left behind  
my hands`caresses  
on your hair  
And I went away.*

...

*Fashion me a bouquet,  
Where one carnation  
grows roots alongside  
the other.*

### **III. The night in stillness**

#### **Midnight**

*At this, the midnight hour  
the walls in the room are caving in on me  
and I reduced to nothing.*

*At this, the midnight hour  
All the trees are in deep slumber,  
While the star that fell  
Was swallowed up  
by the darkness in the garden.*

*At this, the midnight hour,  
friends have gone astray  
in the jungle of my memories  
and my dreams linger and are hanging elsewhere.*

*At this the mightnight hour  
friends have gone astray  
in the jungle of my memories  
and my drens linger and are hangning elsewhere.*

*At this the midnight hour  
I am waiting for someone.*

*No.*

*Am I waiting for someone?  
My hand is sleeping  
with my cheek.*

...

*Night!*  
*You are there,*  
*and i am here.*  
*Only a row candlelights separeates us.*

*Night!*  
*All colours recede*  
*Under your black cape,*  
*beside your black heart.*  
*What do you hope to at my wall?*

*Night!*  
*You seek my dreams,*  
*and knock upon reminiscene`door.*  
*"The wo*

*You Night,*  
*are there,*  
*I am there.*  
*Only a row of candlelight separates us.*

...

*Night!*  
*You seek my dreams,*  
*and knock upon reminisce door.*  
*"The world are as leaves, that are being whirled around in a storm."*

*The darkness  
is a black light  
with nary a sound,  
except for the trees cry for help  
and the carnations sighs  
in the jaws of the night.*

*You Night,  
are there,  
I am here.  
Only a row of candlelight separates us.*

*My most beautiful dreams I wear on me  
to fall asleep upon.  
And who do I become?*

*This I enjoy :  
Selecting my dreams,  
to dream, to dream  
from the tree of sleep.*

*Presently I find myself in the land of deep loneliness,  
which even the trees have abandoned...*

*Ahead of me, my feet gather themselves together,  
While my heart rests ponderously  
upon my chest.*

*Here we are,  
my dream and I  
both of us are desolate  
In the jungle of night.*



## **Dying at night**

*I lay down my body  
as if fallen,  
heavy*

*- then the bed opened up,  
as if death itself came.*

*I come during the night  
with my wet coat  
and my pale face.*

*I knock on the door  
- you must not open it.  
I knock on the window  
- you must not open it.*

*And when I am gone,  
Look for me,  
through the curtains,  
or  
through the keyhole.*

*The moon illuminates the room.  
Can my candlelight then have respite ?*

## Escape

*I will embark upon a journey  
down a road  
which is not mine.  
Perhaps I shall use  
a cloud as my chariot  
and the wind as my steed.*

*I will veil all the mirrors  
and at a distance,  
far away from the light  
I will store my ALL.  
No one will be able to see me.  
I will change heavens  
as I change shirts,  
and the earth as I change trousers.  
I will walk barefoot,  
Perhaps even naked.*

*I will not say hello  
to any newcomers,  
nor will I say Goodbye  
to one who is leaving.*

*I will hide myself  
in my garments  
and cover my body  
with water.*

*I will illuminate my face  
with the darkness  
- and not open my door*

*nor draw the curtains  
nor knock on anybody's door  
nor take a single step.*

*and no friend  
either will take  
one step  
towards me.*

*I will sit alone  
in my own company  
and celebrate.  
I will happy, so happy  
over my sorrow.*

*I will store  
my pain between  
my wrinkles.  
I will not stare too long  
into a newspaper  
so it cannot  
stare back at me.*

*I will gather my  
fingerprints  
and pack away all my foot tracks.*

*I will choose to take my walks  
in days of rain  
and take the fog with me  
to the bench*

*I will retire early  
into tranquillity  
and wake up early.*

*I will give my  
footsteps to the earth  
thereby  
stealing them.*

*I will make myself paper  
that does not reveal its words,  
that lights up my night  
and turns off my day.*

*I will poke at  
all my wounds, so my pain  
will never find rest. .*

## **The limbs in delusion**

*I,  
the only one who talks,  
I,  
the one who regrets my words,  
I,  
who comes without being summoned,  
I,  
the inquisitive  
- but without answers  
except for myself.*

*I will gather that which I have  
already uttered from the winds ears.  
I,  
my souls visitor.*

*Never  
will a body  
let it  
come to stay.*

*I am not created  
for subjugation,  
my feet are not created to flee.*

*I did not choose this body  
as the exile for the soul.*

*The one  
who does not see my face  
cannot see me,  
the one  
who does not know my name  
cannot summon me.*

*( I have not gone.  
Why do you shout  
at me? )*

*My abode is my body  
in the company with my  
limbs.  
The body  
- the place where limbs suffer delusion.*

*My head is the vendor  
in the bazaar for bodies.  
My limbs are the wares.*

*My body!  
I shall leave you  
while you sleep  
and escape.*

*The heaviest part of me  
is my clothing.  
Why is the lightest  
part of me  
my head?*

...

*I will steal your umbrella  
and send you the rain*

*Had i been drops of rain  
I would have fallen upon you.*

*Had you been the rain  
I would have avoided you  
Under my umbrella.*

*I became very happy the first time  
that i saw you-  
I also became sad*

*She said:  
come back as you are.*

*When I came back  
I did not know  
how I have been.*

...

*A single body  
is not enough for  
the pain i feel*

*The door of the house is a mouth,  
that swallows me up day in and day out.*

*His friends are like flowers,  
that come up during the spring.*

*On the languid surface of the water  
the river painted my portrait,  
and the wind tore it away.*

*My shadow moves gently  
over my feet,  
which do not know  
what the darkness may conceal.  
My footsteps are all that i own.  
- which way do i go?*

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