



## *The Enemy*

**Mahmoud Darwish**

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Translation by Catherine Cobham

I was there a month ago. I was there a year ago. I was always there as if I was never anywhere else. In 1982 the same thing happened to us as is happening now. We were besieged and killed and fought against the hell we encountered. The casualties /martyrs don't resemble one another. Each of them has a distinctive physique and distinctive features, different eyes and a different name and age. The killers are the ones who all look the same. They are one being, distributed over different pieces of hardware, pressing electronic buttons, killing and vanishing. He sees us but we don't see him, not because he's a ghost but because he's a steel mask on an idea—he is featureless, eyeless, ageless and nameless. It is he who has chosen to have a single name: the enemy.

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**CREDIT:** Darwish, Mahmoud. 2009. "The Enemy." Pp. 8 in *A River Dies of Thirst: Journals* by Mahmoud Darwish. Translated from the Arabic by Catherine Cobham. Brooklyn, NY: Archipelago Books. Gratefully reprinted by permission from the publisher of the poem.