



The Rest of A Life

Mahmoud Darwish

Translations by Catherine Cobham

If someone said to me: 'You're going to die here this evening
so what will you do in the time that remains?' I would say
'I will look at my watch
drink a glass of juice
and crunch on an apple
and observe at length an ant that has found her day's supply of food
Then look at my watch:
there is still time to shave
and take a long shower. A thought will occur to me:
One should look nice to write
so I'll wear something blue
I will sit until noon, alive, at my desk
not seeing a trace of colour in the words
white, white, white

I will prepare my last meal
pour wine into two glasses: for me
and an unexpected guest
then take a nap between two dreams
but the sound of my snoring will wake me
Then I will look at my watch:
there is still time to read
I will read a canto of Dante and half a *mu'allaha*
and see how my life goes from me
into other people, and not wonder who
will take its place'
'Just like that?'
'Just like that'
'Then what?'

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'I will comb my hair
and throw the poem, this poem
in the rubbish bin
put on the latest shirt from Italy
say my final farewell to myself with a backing of Spanish violins
then
walk
to the graveyard!'