



## *The Rest of A Life*

**Mahmoud Darwish**

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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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**CREDIT:** Darwish, Mahmoud. 2009. "The Rest of A Life." Pp. 19-20 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.

'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!'