



Mantra for Mahmoud Darwish

Jack Hirschman

Poet

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Poet Jack Hirschman composed the poem “Mantra for Mahmoud Darwish” in the French language (only the second poem he has ever written in French) in the home of his French translator, the poet Gilles B. Vachon, for an event celebrating the life and work of Darwish which was held early in December 2008 at a Grenoble restaurant. The form of the mantra is a form he has used once before when, many years ago, he mantraded the name of Jalaluddin Rumi in the same manner. The form is intended to evoke, through repetition, and iconized the image of the poet. In the instance, especially the phrase “the new Palestine,” Hirschman wanted to project forward into the future the significance of this great Palestinian poet’s work. Shortly after Darwish’s death, five poets enthusiastic about his poetry—Nina Serrano, the Palestinian-American poet Deema Shehabi, Neeli Cherkovski, Leonore Weiss and Hirschman himself—read Darwish’s poetry over Pacifica’s KPFA Radio in Berkeley, CA, just as comrades in Grenoble sounded Darwish’s work in that Grenoble restaurant. An English translation of Hirschman’s poem “Mantra for Mahmoud Darwish” appearing herein (next page) was prepared by UMass Boston honors alumni and special issue co-editor Erica Mena.

Mah
Mahmoud
Mahmouddar
Mahmouddarwish
Mahmouddarwishgrande
Mahmouddarwishgrandepo
Mahmouddarwishgrandepoet
Mahmouddarwishgrandepoetla
Mahmouddarwishgrandepoetlanou
Mahmouddarwishgrandepoetlanouveau
Palestine chantera tes mots comme des cris
Incendiaires et pleins de compassion dans les oreilles
Du lendemain glorieux

Jack Hirschman has published more than 100 books of poetry, half of them translations from 9 languages. He is former poet laureate of the city of San Francisco and, as the poet-in-residence with the friends of the San Francisco public library he organized the highly successful San Francisco International Poetry Festival that brought poets from nineteen countries to read in July 2009.

MANTRA FOR MAHMOUD DARWISH

Mah
Mahmoud
Mahmouddar
Mahmouddarwish
Mahmouddarwishgreat
Mahmouddarwishgreatpo
Mahmouddarwishgreatpoet
Mahmouddarwishgreatpoethe
Mahmouddarwishgreatpoethenew
Mahmouddarwishgreatestpoethenew
Palestine will sing your words like cries
Incendiary and full of compassion sung for the ears
 Of a glorious tomorrow

(by Jack Hirschman, translated by Erica Mena)