



Assassination

Mahmoud Darwish

Translation by Catherine Cobham

The critics kill me sometimes:
they want a particular poem
a particular metaphor
and if I stray up a side road
they say: 'He has betrayed the road'
And if I find eloquence in grass
they say: 'He has abandoned the steadfastness of the holm oak'
And if I see the rose in spring as yellow
they ask: 'Where is the blood of the homeland in its petals?'
And if I write: 'It is the butterfly my youngest sister
at the garden door'
they stir the meaning with a soup spoon
And if I whisper: 'A mother is a mother, when she loses her child
she withers and dries up like a stick'
they say: 'She trills with joy and dances at his funeral
for his funeral is his wedding'

And if I look up at the sky to see
the unseen
they say: 'Poetry has strayed far from its objectives'
The critics kill me sometimes
and I escape from their reading
and thank them for their misunderstanding
then search for my new poem.
River Dies.

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