



Marah Bukai

AL-WAREF
PUBLISHING HOUSE

"A crucial, prominent, and sharp witted figure--
She unveils, from the heart in all the language she speaks and through poetry, the sectarian and political oppressing factors in relation to the threat of the fundamentalism monologue in the Middle East".

*Dr. Steven Livingston
George Washington University*

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Also by Marah Bukai

*Escaping
The Other Face of Fire
Words and Water
Juliet Rises Up From Her Tomb
Backstage*

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BY

Marah Bukai

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***I dedicate this book to My Sun-
Son Hazem Alghabra.***

Marah

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O

“Birth, not death, is the hard loss”.

Louise Glück

Jeopardy

She abridges the contending colors
Of her kind
In one

This way,
All swirl in their impurities,
Whereas her water
Is the firstborn.

All abandoned her
Since she hid away inside her cage,
Dark as the depths,
Bright as a slap.

All abandoned her
Out of ignorance
Or jeopardy.

All abandoned her
Since she became
The zealous and the unruly
Combined.

She never improvised love
Without exaggerating her impetuosity
And never crafted a rhyme
Without suffering its sting.

Pledged to the postponed moment,
Sculpted by the uncertain signs:

She is the orbit
Of the defeated pleasure,
And the ripe fruit
On a stripped “table spread”

Pledged to the postponed moment,
Sculpted by the uncertain signs:

She is who they would disclose not
Nor would lay the cross on.

The Imams judge
That she has to lay the veil
All over her willing organs

Yet, happiness requires
The harvest of her first blood
As she is the oblation of the tribes.

Darkened by interdiction,
Outspread to the edges:
She is the Magdalene of the days of sin.

I say:
Leave her to the mission of roses
Spreading clouds of incense
Over the dismissing heads

Leave her to the milk of dawn
Dropping its blessings
On the seedling of slumber

Leave her to the act of the wind
Heaving her desire
To the silk of the ocean

Leave her to the vertigo
Under her toppled dome
And broken sky

I say:
Leave her
To the vain duel
In Babylon
Dishonored by
Homelessness,
Traffic,
And electricity of crime.

The Mask

Do not wear the mask tonight
I am not going to dance.

No more oxygen to share
Under the sheets
Nor a single tremble
To clear the soul.

Stay away from my conspiracy
I am genetically Arab-

I do not have the luxury of the blue eyes
To pass on to our possible children,
Nor the command of the language
To claim an identity
Or fight the tragic collapse of my dimensions.

Do not forget to turn off the sun
Before retreating from my skin
And, deliberately
Stripping my tree

Collect all the dead candles,
The dry clouds,
and my mute scream
Before you slam the door

Free the room from your traces
I want to spin into emptiness.

The shades are up
However, there is no light:
Your forehead is no longer...

Welcome... Darkness.

Spinning

My heart is a piece of sugar
Under a strike of a hoof

My blood is an intersection
On the Silk Road.

I get ready
For my cremation
Yet,
Allah denies
My burial ceremony!

Where is your chest-
I want to dance
To squeeze all my fruits
And spin on the marble
Of a cathedral.

I do not want a balcony
For my violets
Nor a chador
For my lust.

I remove my Kingdoms
Off their wooden pillars,
I hang my habits,
My laziness,
And my books

I walk towards the enriched sand
With the ultimate preparedness
Of my narcissism,
Neither my blaze declares bankruptcy
Nor my selfishness lowers the head

My fiercest aspiration
Is to dance...!

Dervish

Washed in the blood of the lamb
That stranger,
With a feather of a hoopoe
He dries up.

Is it whiteness
That purifies his robe
Or simply,
Is it the desire to improvise?!

She was his alerting story
She was his delirium's gold.

Broken off spring,
She gets darkened
By obscurity of love.

A woman and her incense
Both whisper
To his soul

However,
Like a dervish
He turns
He turns
He turns

Suddenly,
The silk
Approached him

So,
He died down...

Camp X-ray

In a legal black hole
Heavily guarded
By nightmares and mosses
You have detained my fins.

From the rootless anxiety
To the premeditated tunnel
Of segregation,
You dragged me all along.

You hijacked my precious moments
From a cloud of grace
To the battlefield of uncertainty:
I, the non-combatant...

Abandoned to the grave
Of sameness,
No charge
But blind loyalty
To your blood,
I crawled
With a bare chest
Over the burning rocks
Of your sinful agony.

You must face it
Loud and lucid
To be heard at last
By all thirsty hyenas:

You were violating
My right
To a fair duel!

Kneeling before you
Shackled,
Bound,
Masked,
And blindfolded

For years to come,
You will be haunted
By the heavy shadow
Of our relentless fiasco.

Each of us,
Faces looking towards
The pale blue wall
Where the bones
Of the last female whale
Roamed the waves
Towards the shores
Of isolation...

Hence,
You confine yourself
Across the fantasy of denial,
I confine myself
To the blossoms of oblivion.

Decay

I return from the starting point
I adopt the doctrine of rebels
I learn the tactic of outpouring

I split the dawn with my knife
Before the foam seduces me

I draw a hat or an exit
For the shocking of language

I deliberately reveal
My hasty treasons

I bite the homeland candies
On decayed teeth

And from the estimated non-starting point
I improvise
The right of return:

A Toothbrush!

Mercury

With your chaos
Weaved by
The yarns of my short fingers
I open up the memory...

My feeble organs
Afflict your blood-
Invoking the silk
Of the shirt.

My amazement recalls
The inception of mud
In our story.

For Years
Isolation was the sociology
Of the happy exiles

I celebrate the metaphors
Of postponed speech
And lazy derivations-
No language could reveal its instincts
Nor a shiver could mend
What got disconnected.

I strip the spices
Off their authentic flavors
And retire with the superfluous fuzz
Of beginnings

I pick out a flesh
Equivalent to the milk of the dawn

I melt the sugar
Exaggerating the flow
Of my nerve

Consequently,
I end up with HIM:

The pulse of signs,
And campaign of holidays

He drops me at the swing of poetry
And disappears
In the debate of celebration-

Fireworks are the spread of his wings
Fairytale is his glowing forehead

Mercury of all time:

He stays,
He leaves,

He is a shelter,
He is a brink.

Insane

Hey you:

The devoted in his oppression,

Fierce in his passion,

Till when Will you be pursuing me

As a recited curse?

Till when will you keep rolling along my throat

As sweet saliva?

My voice is rising from your precious wheat

O sickle!

They sold you my wrath

And bought a bucket

For your artesian well.

O herald!

My table spread is lame,

The way is blind,

How could resurrection occur

Among all this violation?!

They granted me the outburst of time

What a miserable dwelling!

They said to him: you are the fireworks

They said to me: You are the insane.

O witness,

You displaced my elements

And ran away

Falsehood is you!

And
When time has come,
I closed up my skull
On your decomposed scene
And slowly
Receded...

The Performer

There will be no dream
There will be no sedition
There will be no veil.

They taught him to dance
And, he rattled towards his splendid death.

They drove him to his vulnerable belongingness
Enthusiastically, he exploded.

They overturned his skull
And, he leaned to his prayers.

And where he reconciled to his flesh
They hammered him to a chop of wood
Hence,
He cracked!

Scepter

Cleansed from memories
Indulged in roughness

I trim my eyelashes
And undress my fruits!

This way,
There is a roof
For the mourning ones
And some bread
For the banquet.

As bitter as love,
As fragile as sand,
As controversial as a crime,
I have retreated.

This way,
The passers-by
Slap my serenity
With their snake scepter

Carelessly,
They spread the sheet
Over my raw desire

Intentionally,
They recall the oil
Of the suicides
So that
I do not die

From blackmail!

Homeland and love Update

I

Incense

To you
I return
From my shadow,
I straighten up
In the solemn poetry
Towered
By your pledged ripe words
And rhetorical speech.

Voluntarily
Withdrawn
To the ambiguity of signs
I keep on digging
Through intimacy.

I come out of you
With a legal healing
Of my sunstroke.

Distance maneuvers me
So, I swirl within the feverish circles-
You slip away into my head-
Inundating it
With your secret water.

Your hands get burned

The moment they visit
Their female
In her vertigo incense.

Ultimately,
I abandon
The choir of chanters
Who whisper to my silence:
No language gathers me with its billhook
But the language of your massive downpour.

II

Pathway

It is Beirut,
Time and again,
Suntanned
by the fresh familiarity
Of its morning,
Stained by the water
Of its early fruits
And derivations of politics.

It is Beirut
Path of the scream,
String of responses
And Clouds of
Those gone with the wind
Pursuing a question.

It is Beirut,

In her superfluous illusion
And arousing icon.

And it is you,
Time and again,
The nerve
Of the determined lance:

You approach,
The silk welcomes me

You quit,
I fade away

III

Army

It is the daybreak
Shaking my body in its milk
Moistening
What was burned
Of my open vein.

It is the glow of the rocks
Anchored
In their blond tyranny.

It is the early tobacco
Carving ridges
In the bends of the chest.

It is you,

Wing of the distance
Paved with smoke
And water.

It is me,
At the round
Of my non avenged grudge
Committing the furious act:
Digging in your copious language.

It is Beirut,
Few foreign soldiers,
Great headache,
Insomnia,
And dismissed pleasure.

It is Beirut,
Few foreign soldiers
But enough of
Stubborn borders
Sprayed with
Wild thyme
And whipped desire.

IV

Station

The shadow leans
Towards a shadow
While updating
The script of love and homeland

As for Love,

Towards your glorious valleys
It is stretching
Like a spreading heresy

As for homeland,
In your skin network
It is trapped
As a red fish
Drowning into
The shock of saltiness.

Beirut, Suicide Rock

Sand

Settlers or Sailors:

At the edge of my spirit
They lean,
My seduction flute
They toast,
The sand of my sadness
They dig,
To the wind
They shoot my fruit:

Wood is their passage
Priest, their Oil.

Settlers or Sailors:

At the edge of my spirit
They lean,
My seduction flute
They toast,
The sand of my sadness
They dig,
To the wind
They shoot my Fruit:

Temple is their snow
Cedar is their scent.

O

O tyrants:

Your conspiracy
Separated us

The pupil of time
Fell down
Into the exile's glove

And the snow borrowed
From my blood
The prostitute's hat

O, my widowed heart:

The throbbing Drums
Separated us-

Your flag
Is a dove
Your grape
Is a child.

I swirl into the metaphors,
The door of the city
Is sand:

O, the virginity of embezzlement

O, the glow of that vanished land.

Pigeon

At the gardens of Luxemburg
Drums, genies, and breasts
Gathered to dance

In my city
Lovers are separated
Over a lie.

Here,
We fly the early pigeons
Towards the sun

There,
They hammer at our children
The cross.

Paris, Jardins du Luxembourg

Forsaken

What is the meaning of time
That raids not on us
like a sin,
Or the meaning of an attack
That meets not its challenges
Like a moment of love?!

Vulnerable are our souls
Rude our illusions
We are desperate, but fierce
Sinful, but discretionary.

Where is the wild Jasmine
Attempting
To topple its fences?

Where is your sickle
collecting
The abandoned memories?

Where are the jailers, coachmen,
Hatred sweepers,
And their metastasis
At the authority corridors?

Where are the bargainers,
Dissidents,
And cigarettes traffickers?

Where are the semi-killers,
Semi-saints,
And perfect whores?

Where are the keys of a defeated man
In the city of instinct:

Paris!

We the forsaken,
Erected as Eiffel
Ungrateful as cats
Dampened by fast love
On a sidewalk.

Suspected of chaos,
Dispute,
Dissidence,
Detestation,
Anger,
And sedition
We deliberately endorse
Strangers,
And split into sects
Over a political joke.

We the forsaken,
Ideologists
When the utopian city
Fell in the hands of poets.

Fascists,
When militarism
Collapsed

Fleeing passion,
Money,
And public squares

Frowning as Gods,
Neither the devil blesses us
Nor throne's snipers

Volunteer the mercy shot
To the decayed skull
Staring in its cage
Towards
Obscurity...

Her

It is hurting,

Now,
That everything else has gone.

Give me a hand
For the last round,
I still have the urge
To draw your portrait
With some desperate verses.

I guess you are with her
By now...
Together enjoying
The blazing fireplace,
Some expensive wine,
And a lot of memories.

Is she trying
To seduce you?
Does she have
Firmer breasts than mine?
Are you willing
To share with her
Bed and grapes
Again?!

Today,
No phone calls
Nor emails
To inject some blood
Into the dryness
Of my veins.

Where is your chest
I want to die...

At the happy hour,
18th Street lounge
Alone,
I stood at a dark corner
Drinking my last scotch on the rocks,
Recalling the glow
Of your royal forehead.

O God!
What color is your hemoglobin?!

Shakespearian Night

All these moments,
The sparkling night,

The river that crosses
City and spirit.

All these people
On Halloween...
All this craziness,
The colorful outfits,
The emotional street.

All these golden leaves
That swirl through our steps
While crossing the bridge
Over DC's Canal.

At this demanding autumn night,
Full moon night,
Shakespearian Night,
I touched your chest,
Listened to your heartbeats
Mixed with the water's whisper-

Your chest was warm...

I buried my exhausted head
Into the ecstasy of wet grass
Took a deep breath:

"I have a home again."

Swan

O Floating mother
Over the speechless wave,
You amass

The splendor of seasons,
You fertilize
Bread and sect
Into a mulatto swan!

Your exile
Is my Fountain
Your time
Is my stone.

You, the one
Rimmed
By galaxies and toys:
In my throat
Your prayer
Is gathering.

O virtue,
Your bright blood
Is fueling
The scandal's balloons.

Your spirit
Is my soil-
Desirable Goddess,
I am the assassin
And the prey,
I swiftly bury
My fertility key
Into the light channel
Between your breast
And mine:

You,
Eternity!

Cave

O Dad,
Thanks for your towering death
Before your wheat lit

The prod of cowboys,
Or your fire branded
The preys of isolation

Thanks
For your impertinent fall
That ended the heydays
Of your offspring

Thanks
For the separation
That turned our home
Into a herd of widows

I say:

Why the withdrawal
While your voice remains as sharp
As a shiver?

Why the void
While your face is endlessly blooming
In its eternity?

Why the fruit
While the braid of paradise
Still drapes the bare back
Of your daughter:

The Protrusive,
The Willing,
The One!

Little Death

Obscure are the orange blossoms,
Scandalous is the brink of a grave.

All dreams that leaked from a poem are bygone,
All moments that vanished from illusion are expected.

Both of us are working to free a cloud
Both of us are incapable to receive a shiver.

Neither a yarn could mend the buttonhole of loneliness
Nor a saddle could curb the flow of desire.

The runner has fallen to the trap of distance.

How much time remained to snipe at a rose?
How many roses were drifted to a mass grave?!

Island

Slapped by the nerve
Of the Blue,
I return the wind

To its purposes,
And tremble
As abandoned papers
Of a poet.

Yearning
Takes me over,
While the water
Exchanges
My body
Wave
By
Wave.

Nonchalantly,
I pull my exhausted fins
To the potential sand:

Your chest becomes
An island...

Urn

I was already murdered
When they aimed their tenderness
Towards my skull-

Paved with silver and fruit

They realize not
The rage of birds
Departing the cloud
Of my last dream.

I was murdered
When the Imams declared war
Over “The Bloody Shirt”

My feathers were trimmed to the bones,
And the decay was solid as an urn.

I was the virgin of the sect
When they auctioned my flesh...

As for my slaver,
His only passions were
Trade
And vanity

As for my anklet,
It was the echo
Of their snorting,
Their legislations of women’s rights
On inheritance,
And custody.

[Chaff - chaff - chaff]

The millstone’s incitement
Disturbs my tranquility

This is how two stones

Bite the body's wheat

This is how
The judges attack
The pistachios of our heydays
So we menstruate not!

As for my mother,
She is the patroness of moons,
The priestess of exile

Her figure is a cloud,
Her pain is a random shot

My mother bestows on the urn:
Bountiful milk,
And stately fatigue.

And
You were hidden
Between the actual,
And fog...

Sweeping is your approach,
Scandalous is your trespassing
Of my semi-virgin/ semi-profane pines.

Where is your devil
To dismiss the guards
Out of my secret chambers?

Where is your knife
Painfully drowning
Into my protruding brooklet?

Provocative as a field of poppies,
You fell from the soil
Of my perfect coma...

Blessed is your collapse

Blessed is what ripened not of:
Poetry,
Bread,
And crime.

**The Bloody Shirt is referred to the assassination of the third Khalife of Islam, after the prophet Mohammed, by the Outsiders- an event that marked the division of Muslims on two camps: Sunni and Shiite.*

Vulnerability

It is the last reading...

You were taken

By the lace of history,
Or by vulnerability.

I inspire
Your roan poetry
Paved along my grave.

I open the gate
All the way
Towards controversy.

O, you!
Puzzled
As a glove of blaze,
Here is my finger-

The ring fell,
The talk likewise.

Mercy Shot

It has to be quick
And determined!

Hold out you courage
And direct the single bullet
Straight towards my skull
Fooled
By dreams, crows,
And sterile clouds

Do not hesitate...

Enter history
As the killer
Of the last female
On earth.

It has to be quick
And determined...

O agony,
“Birth, not death, is the hard loss”

Who says that these
Half-saint/half-criminal eyes
Could be that treacherous?!

Journey

In my determined journey,
Through multiple seductions,
The road overtakes my steps.

I achieve the distance
By sipping
The fog of a well.

My unforeseen discovery
Stings me
With the harmony
Of the one
Pretending rashness.

They are just men:
Some of them are
Sparkles
Others,
Vibrations.

Yet the river bank
Has its own history
Of elements,
Its own pride
Of metaphors,
And its devotion
To roses.

This way,
Debatably,
I trim my steps
I spread my braids.

This way,
Gently,
I call on a bird
To a space!

To a den!

The Suicides

Murmur of rhymes,
Ink of delirium,
Horses,
And a trembling hand
To set off
The early bread.

Wide are your balconies,
Mute is the day...
How could we proceed
Through all these treasons?

[They undermined the horse]

Whose funeral is this?
The revolution funeral!

[Burial of revolution]

The suicides are singing
To their children

The suicides
Throw a banquet
To the guards

The suicides
Smoke the hookah
And
Whiff the haze

Of the last blood.

Red and Black

This dizziness,
The dystrophy of soul,
The gathering of strangers,
The trauma of isolation.

We knit the possibility
Of *Red and Black*
So we reach *Stendhal* café
And end up
With a semi- raw heart.

In this fashion
We trick paleness
And deceive time

In this fashion
We oppress nausea
And exaggerate in dancing

In this fashion
We violate
The consistency of chants
And we toast Paris...

Paris – Café “Stendhal”

Females

Those abjectly sorrowful
Those loftily tumbling
Those schismatically ascetic

Those compulsorily away
Those perseveringly pleasant
Those grizzled of surprise

Those morosely vanquished
Those ruminatively retreated
Those flapping lust

Those inadvertently existent
Those coercively subjugated
Those willingly prostituted

Those lavishly regressed
Those forcibly upturned
Those flabbily victorious

Those chaotically radiant
Those extemporaneously artful
Those cohesively interconnected.

