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Silence of Autumn

Autumn, you that have undressed all the trees,
season that has stolen the fruits nestled in my arms,
who can possibly take you on and win?
Autumn, you that have dismantled word by word
every sentence that I have strung together in a necklace,
why have you dissipated in the wind every consonant
and left every vowel downtrodden?
I owned nothing but words, and words meant all to me,
fragrant to the touch like the humble thyme,
wafting softly through the air like the notes of a flute,
glancing gracefully like a child.
They were toys of an ageless soul,
unaware of a looming autumn.
Autumn, you who hide and count the hours
to stealthily pounce like a thief,
nothing is left except fractured syllables
receding far into nothingness.
Like a nomad bereft of all he had,
here stand I, my hands raised up, I surrender
completely. I am a poet for evermore speechless.

Sikta tal-Harifa

Harifa li nezzajt is-sigar kollha,
stagun li sraqtli l-frott migbur f'dirghajja,
min jista' jilghab mieghek bla ma jitlef?
Harifa li zarmajtli kelma b'kelma
sentenzi li dammejthom bhal hannieqa,
ghaliex tajjart mar-rih kull konsonanti,
u kull vokali xhettha fl-art mirfusa?
Ma kelli xejn hlief kliem, u l-kliem kien kollox,

ifuh bhas-saghtar umli malli tmissu
 idoqq minn taht l-ilsien bhal flawt kif tonfhu,
 ihares lejk sabih bhal wicc tarbija.
 Kien gugarell tar-ruh li qatt ma tikber
 u ma ntebhix bil-wasla tal-harifa.
 Harifa li tistahba w tgbodd is-siegħa
 li nkiss inkiss tissaltja bhal halliela,
 ma baqa' xejn hlief sillabi miksura
 sejrjn jidwu lilhinn sakemm jintilfu.
 Bhal nomadu misruq mill-ftit li kellu,
 hawn jien, b'idejja t-tnejn 'il fuq incedi
 bla kundizzjoni. Jien poeta mutu.

The Heart of the Universe

When the heart of the universe rifts few notice
 and they are people on the edge,
 a breeze is all it takes for them to fall.
 Pain without noise, a trickle on the water,
 riven is the heart of the universe, like a wish pierced
 bleeding until the veins run dry.

Il-Qalb ta' l-Univers

Il-qalb ta' l-univers meta tixxaqqaq
 ffit biss jintebhu—u huma n-nies tax-xifer
 li ziffa timbuttahom u jaqghu. Weggha
 bla hoss, tektika fuq il-wicc ta' l-ilma,
 imxaqqa l-qalb ta' l-univers, bhal xewqa
 minfuda tnixxi d-demmm sa ma tizvina.

Lament of Spring

Spring, you do not deliver your promise
 and fritter away your fortune with all in bets,
 you are no better than the drought of autumn
 and risk in abandon without losing,
 your paeans I do not comprehend, and choose
 the winds of the wintry nights. Blow through me,
 unremitting January, April that fools
 those who believe in you, your sneer strikes
 like thunderbolt deep in the well of my heart.
 I shall prize free the arrow with which you strike me,

I shall await the wound to heal, and forget.
 A season of waiting is this spring,
 this was the birds' lament which I ignored,
 tonight the moon appears to converse
 and I shall walk the path it shows.
 There appear the shadows and there these feet
 leave their blood stained marks.
 You have won this bet as well, spring.

Ilment tar-Rebbiegha

Rebbiegha li ma troddx il-weghda tieghek
 u tberbaq gidek ma' kulhadd fl-imhatri,
 m'intix ahjar min-nixfa tal-harifa
 u taf tissogra zzejjed bla ma titef.
 L-ghanjiet li ddoqq ma nifhimhomx, u naghzel
 l-irwiefen ta' lejl xitwi. venven fija,
 Jannar li ma tghaddix. April li tidhak
 b'min jemmen fik, id-dahka tieghek tinzel
 dritt bhal sajjetta f'qiegh il-bir ta' qalbi.
 Naqlaghha l-vlegga tqila li twaddabli,
 nistenna l'gerha taghlaq u ninsieha.
 Stagun ta' mistennija dir-rebbiegha,
 l-ghasafar hekk jghiduli w qatt m'emminthom,
 illejla l-qamar jixref u jkellimni
 u nohrog fil-moghdija mdawla minnu.
 Hemm jidhru d-dellijiet u hemm il-passi
 ta' dar-riglejn ihallu tbajja' homor.
 Irbahtha wkoll, Rebbiegha, din l-imhatra.

Orchid

I shall always carry you with me, Orchid,
 harvested from a desert without seasons.
 I know not how you blossomed here without my planting you
 in this earth which yields nothing. Now I shall protect you
 with every teardrop that nurtures you from my hand.
 I shall carry you with me on this voyage, and my road
 shall take me to its end, wide open,
 a desert that denies flowers to blossom.
 With my eyes I utter a word you understand,
 with my lips I weave for you this poem,
 and with my heart I grant you the breath that sustains you.
 This is the last will of a pauper who never hoped,

a beggar with nothing to wait for.
 I shall always carry you with me, Orchid,
 I shall declare you at every airport
 until worn out I lie down to rest
 and you shall remain here, guardian of my grave,
 with your roots entangled in the depths of my heart,
 my heart your soil, Orchid.

Orkidea

Ingorrok mieghi dejjem, Orkidea,
 maqtugha minn dezert minghajr staguni,
 ma nafx kif kbirtli hawn minghajr ma zrajtek
 f'din l-art li ma trodd xejn, issa se nharsek
 b'kull demgha li nisqik kuljum fidejja.
 Ingorrok mieghi tul il-vjagg, u triqti
 tehodni fejn trid hi, miftuha berah,
 dezert li ma jhallix il-fjuri jikbru.
 B'ghajnejja nghidlek kelma li tifhimha,
 b'xofftejja ndomm ghalik dil-poezija,
 u b'qalbi ntik in-nifs li jzommok hajja.
 dan hu testment ta' fqir li qatt ma ttama,
 tallab li m'ghandu xejn aktar x'jistenna.
 Ingorrok mieghi dejjem, Orkidea,
 niddikjarak fkull ajruport fejn nasal
 sakemm ghajjien ninzel nistrieħ u inti
 tibqaghli hawn, ghassiesa ta' dal-qabar,
 b-gheruqek imqabbdin fil-fond ta' qalbi,
 qalbi l-hamrija tieghek, Orkidea.

The Closed Door

Should you at night open wide your heart
 the night steals in immediately and sleeps there.
 Should you at night fix your gaze at the stars,
 they will address you with the language of secrets.
 And should you stay awake for hours, you will hear
 in silence the heart of the universe beat.
 Fear nothing: listen carefully and you will follow
 the two hearts beat as one.
 You will have discovered the closed door of mystery.
 No one has yet crossed the threshold of that door.
 Remember well the road to know your way back again.

Il-Bieb Imsakkar

Jekk fil-ghaxija tiftah qalbek berah
jidhollok dlonk il-lejl u jorqod ghandek.
Jekk tul il-lejl ticcassa lejn il-kwiekeb
huma jkellmuk bil-lingwa tas-sigrieti.
U jekk tghaddi s-sighat imqajjem, tisma'
fil-hemda l-qalb ta' l-univers ittektek.

La tinhasadx: issemma' sew u tifhem
li z-zewgt iqlub itektku b'ritmu wiehed.
Tkun sibt il-bieb imsakkar tal-misteru,
lilhinn mill-bieb hadd ghadu qatt ma rifes.
Ftakar it-triq biex taghraf terga' lura.

Translations by Godfrey Grima