

Quietly Returning

Why did the gods abandon it?
Out of love
or impotence?

Sometimes I imagine that small goddesses
are quietly returning
(they're resting now in a thicket of reeds
or under a linden tree)
and that I'm like them:
I too am quietly returning
to the land I abandoned.

Comparisons

“Days more bitter than the Road to Golgotha”—
a comparison
that no longer holds.

“Days more bitter than the Path of Thorns”—
this one's from the mind of a shepherd
who never tended any sheep
(if she really were a shepherd, she'd know
that thorns are part and parcel of the pasture).

“Days of sweetness soon turned cold and bitter”—
this may have come from a person
who'd realized something once, but promptly
let all their knowledge slip away.

A Notebook

You lose it for two days,
and your life's lost with it.
And when you stumble upon it,
you find your life again,
light
and delicate:
No thief ever comes this way
without asking for it.

The Hell of My People

You can't say anything about my people that I don't already know.
Just as I came down from their sky, their clouds, their mountains,
I also experienced their dark valleys and caves,
and I have a complete copy
of the book of their sins;
and even their hyenas and snakes—
I feel for them and love them.

Doubts about my god hurled me around,
but I never once doubted my people.
To them I attributed
all that's worthy of life,
and my love for them is not
the only thing that's blind—
I too am blind,
and I've surrendered the reins to them,
though I know they're leading me to hell.

You Said

You said you'd feed the people
with a handful of wheat
from your small threshing floor,
from the opening of a song,
from the light of your eyes
as they're setting.
You said you'd do this
despite abandonment's burden.

And all I could do was believe you
while you were breaking your body into pieces
for this pilgrimage of strange birds...

Here you are now,
a handful of wheat for the people.

Balad al-Shaykh

I've been to Balad al-Shaykh
to greet the ones resting there.
I stood in the dark and recited the Fatiha.

Lord, even here,
in this graveyard—
must I stand alone?

This Loss

So difficult, this loss:
to imagine your pages
are those of a dead man,
and that death's colleagues
are consoling you now.

An Embrace

I was confused and wet,
and my arms were torn as they tried to embrace
the mountains, the valleys, the plains,
while the sea I loved pulled me under
time and again,
until what was once a lover's body
became a corpse
floating on the surface.

Confused and wet,
my corpse
stretches out its arms now
(like my living body once did),
desperate
for the embrace of the sea
that keeps pulling it under.