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European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

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26.06.2017

Death of the Lake



I once swam in Lake Urmia
Along with my fourteen-year-old sister
And realized that the lake was alive
And had memory.
We swam slowly
Our heads out of the water
Lest the salt got into our eyes, noses and mouths.
We swam so far in the water
That the shore behind us was no longer visible
And we could see the silhouette of an island.
There was no shark to fill our hearts with fear
Nor any algae to grab our feet.
The lake was all ours
With a cloudless sky

And shadows of migrating cranes.
There was no wind to make waves
Nor any boat to disturb our peace.
Our fear was from ourselves
Of the panic of the water overcoming us
Or the temptation of returning to shore
Would capture our souls.
There we stopped moving
And let the water
Tell us of its memories.

There, one could become the lute-player Safi al-Din Urmavi
And listen to the beats of the heart of the lake
Or like Rumi's scribe Hesam al-Din Chalabi
Walk on the cool skin of the water
Tipsy from the seven-thousand-year-old wine of Haji Firooz Village.

There, one could become Hulagu the grandson of Genghis
Take out a sword and conquer Baghdad
And dismantled the canopy of Caliphate forever.
Then get buried in Shahi Island in Lake Urmia
Without any offering of human sacrifice.

There, one could become Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria
Conquer Media and Persia
And call the coastal town "Urmia"
Which means "the city of water".

There, one could become the high mobed of Azarbaijan
Descend the fire temple of Azargoshasp and Shiz Volcano,
Turn around seven hills of ashes,
Wash off the road dust from one's body in the lake
And call the lake "Chi Chast"
Which means "shiny".

There, one could become a martyr of Miandoab City
Ruholah or Hamid or Faramarz

Swim with one breath from Zarineh or Simineh River
Until one reaches Lake Urmia.
One could become Javanshir's mother or Jahangir's sister
Rub black mud all over one's body
And lay down in the sun
Until joint pains relax
And skin rashes subside.

There, one could become Turk, Kurd, Persian
Assyrian, Armenian or Jew,
And from Lake Urmia
Join all other lakes of Iran:
Bakhtegan, Hamoon, Parishan, Almagol,
Shorabil, Zarivar, Maharlu, Ovan, Gahar, Aras, Namak,
And even Khor Musa Estuary and Gavkhouni Marsh.

But today
The lake is going dry
And its color is becoming
Bloodier every day.
Am I able to swim with my sister again
In Lake Urmia
This time along with her daughter?
Or should I walk on its salt bed alone
And listen to the sound of my footsteps?
Can our tears
Fill the lake again
And our blood on the street
Dilute its bloody color?
Ohhh!
The lake is dying
With all of its memories
And a salt storn is on its way.

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September 2, 2011