

Nofim

1. O, the heart shrinks

O, the heart shrinks
At the sight of that horrible darkness
And at the sight of those houses in which it dwells

In their midst there are trees
Gardens of trees
And between them demons are running to and fro

Between the houses
I say
There are trees
And between them demons are running to and fro

They shall never run
On the open road

Such is my luck

Their laughter is their laughter
As they are the only ones who laugh laughs

And I am the only one whose luck is such

O, the heart shrinks...

Yuval Rapaport (b. 1975)
Translated from Hebrew by the poet

3. I was waiting for the sun

I was waiting for the sun
And when it arose I greeted it
With a good morning blessing
Yesterday's street lanterns
Were still flowing yellowish on the road
And it felt as if, something was left in me.
Something from the field which lies beyond that road-
A bud of a wild grass was sprouting inside of me
Out of the sweetness of the soil

Who is above us?!

Asked the heavens

You, son of man,

Answer!

I am going to the shower,

I replied.

And then...then I am going to dream about love.

Yuval Rapaport (b. 1975)
Translated from Hebrew by the poet

4. Funeral

He who had sewn a sunset to an orchard of oranges
And embroidered onto them the sea breeze
And a bead-broken, rhyme- broken prayer*,
Knew how to add a cemetery
And how to spot the narrow graveled path with black women

Yes, he who knew how to dilute
In that little cemetery in the Sharon**
The smell of moist ground
With the white smells of blossoming trees,
Knew how to add, with a touch of talent,
A pinch of sweet death

And I, who doesn't know,
Shall not demand,
Shall ask no more,
But will stay silent.

As even to old age I am he***;
And even to hoar hairs I will suffer;
I have made,
And I will bear;
And I will suffer;
And with a bit of luck
I might just escape.

Yuval Rapaport (b. 1975)
Translated from Hebrew by the poet

* In Hebrew, the word "haruz" refers both to bead and to rhyme.

**The Sharon plane is the northern half of the coastal plain of Israel. It lies between the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Samarian Hills to the east and stretches from the city of Haifa and Mount Carmel in the north to the Yarkon River in the south, at the edge of the present city of Tel Aviv. The Plain of Sharon is mentioned in the Bible. In ancient times, the plain was particularly fertile and populous.

*** A paraphrase on Isaiah 46 verse 4