

Poetry Series

TALAL KASSAD
- poems -

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TALAL KASSAD(01/01/1985)

Talal was born in Homs, Syria, the Arab World. He is a student of higher education, most interested in writing English and Arabic poetry. His are for the most part symbolic and ironic poems by which to ridicule people's vanity, insincerity and depraved nature.

Love At No Sight

Hardly a day goes by
Without a dream or thought.
I lived where she can never tell-
I lived inside her heart.

Therein I found so many veins,
Each could feed an eye.
I touched a vein and let a tear fall
With a view to irrigating her sylvan eyes.
But once her eyes grew so misty,
A dropp of tear rolled down warmly...
And then her chest embraced her tears,
For they were once so near-
They were once inside her heart.

But we, by love, were never sinners
Because our love was purified.
She only loved my eyes which never beheld her own,
And so I came to love her own,
By means of which I saw her heart.

TALAL KASSAD

Ode To Chastity

One day I pledged myself to come alive,
And on the nectar of her rose survive.

She has no eyes, nor has she hair,
But she's a beauty beyond compare.

As though she were the eye we find
With shining lids to hurt the blind.

My soul, united with her own, is high
And never found but shining in the sky,

Therefrom I look, my love, at you
Wherein the stars are only few.

If said: "you're fair", it's true but why
Is it that you, with all this, die?

When eyeing her, I feel in love
And gain more light to shine above.

Whenever felt, this love does shine
To render all bad thoughts benign.

What love I feel, though felt of old,
Becomes all people- young and old.

And many though her partners be, in truth,
So chaste are they that none is found uncouth.

TALAL KASSAD

Ode To Nature

That day I wondered how the sun
Could neither set at noon
Nor leave his tiring work undone
To lie beside the moon.

But much to my dismay,
My words, I fancied, made him weary,
But never let him turn his ray
To cast a shadow on the query

I standing still, a dreamless moment passed
Without any answer ever heard
But one that left me all aghast-
The tacit answer I inferred.

TALAL KASSAD

The Global Rape

There I was, but there I'll go again.
Towards an eastern land I make my way,
Wherefrom arose the sun-like beauty,
Wherein the sunshine used to be all day.
But something strange befell the globe.
The east became no longer east.
For, though at noon, the sun was hiding
And hid with it the gleam of hope.
On such a low if weighty land
The virgin girl was once abiding,
The voice of whom resounding
 "The voice of peace"

By no means was she nonnative,
Nor was her peace less native in her heart
Until, by cannons of injustice,
He tore her simple breast apart.
He stripped her peaceful clothing
To wear them in disguise
 Not before he stained them by his fingers
 Nor before he wove them into lies.

But so audacious was he
That with his most unyielding fingers
He never failed to pluck her eyes
 Which, when weeping, oozed with peace
 Which, when laughing, oozed with love

But much to her dismay,
He left her none but something banned.
He left the name of terrorism.
He left the seeds he sowed upon this land-
The seeds of horrors,
The seeds of terrors.
But then as time went by,
The one-time seeds would leave the womb
To be revenged upon the father of the crime,
To be revenged upon a man, so asinine,
Upon a man whose rape was epoch-making,

A man who raped the name of Palestine.

TALAL KASSAD

The King And The Flea

THE CHORUS

A small but cunning flea once vowed
To make the kingdom shout aloud-

To kill the king and then his spouse,
Who pride themselves and oft carouse.

When setting out to launch the strife
She tried to kill him ere his wife.

By less a needle than a dart
She left him almost sick at heart.

Repeating fighting day and night,
She made him muster troops to fight.

When falling short of fighting her
He left the flea to win the spur.

Again the flea began to sting
To leave the kingdom with no king.

As though the king began to dance,
But love and humor had no chance

He started jumping up with pain.
Remorseful tears then fell like rain.

When all the army strove in vain
The insect drove the king insane.

THE KING

I awe allegiance to thine grace,
But let me cure my crimson face.

If what you need is but the throne,
Then come but let me stay alone!

THE CHORUS

She tried his patience once again
So that he fell and struck his brain.

THE KING

I wished the damsels came like thee.
But that was all to fight a flea.

THE CHORUS

No longer can he catch his breath
Because his fate was that of death.

THE CHORUS

The flea then wept and sadly said:
"The prideful hero broke his head"

TALAL KASSAD

The Queer Intimacy

I. THE FIRST MEETING

THE HORSE

Why I love thee why I might
Take thee one day out of spite
Is because we look alike.
So engaging is your sight.
Be thou bending or upright,
I wilt take thee come what might.

THE WOMAN

Try to keep thy tongue at bay
Father told me not to say
Any that gives myself away

THE CHORUS

Off he went, thus weeping, nay
Seeking fortune night and day.

THE HORSE (to himself)

Do inject them with a bribe!
Then the flesh will be well ripe.

II. AT SCHOOL

THE CHORUS

When they saw him in disguise
Partly stupid partly wise
Only one could first surmise
Such a figure was not wise.

Hence the student asked him why
Teachers mostly don't reply

Up he jumped as if to fly
Saying only 'Stop you guy'
So ashamed was he and shy.

Then the student heaved such sighs.
Anguished tears blurred his eyes.
Once again he tried to ask
Then the teacher did but rise

THE TEACHER

Shut your mouth and stop this talk
Or upon you I will walk

THE CHORUS

Not until he jumped with force
Could they know he was a horse.

III. IN THE STREET

THE HORSE (to the woman)

Come at peace and stop this fight!
I have brought you what is bright;
Gold and silver, money'nd might
Take them all but show your sight

THE WOMAN

Come dear come and get your way
Come and love me twice a day
I am you and you are I
Never can I go away.

TALAL KASSAD

The Tragic Life Of Tragedy

Chorus:

Address yourself to things that show the truth,
To things that more mislead than guide the youth.
Inside the campus lay the two despaired
With such a sight as leaves your hope impaired,
One made to laugh, the other made to moan,
But laughter had a better sense than known,
Because a man at times may laugh to take
The breath by which by which a cry of pain to make
And then to send it out again and wail:
"The college air is too repugnant to inhale"

Tragedy:

I am the one at whom they hurl abuse
The one who suffered such a passive use,
The tragic work which makes some readers keep
Laughing at those who write to make them weep.

Comedy:

I am the comic work, which sometimes may
Well make the students pass a tragic day

Tragedy:

At times I find it more or less unfair
To plunge the students into grim despair.
In every subject they may do their best
To get a mark surpassing all the rest.
Since eighty four is what they hope to reach
But what they get is forty-eight in each.

Tragedy:

They set themselves to teach me all the while.
Yet failed to know how far they me beguile.
With all the books they have they like to choose

The worst to gain and hence the best to lose.
The spell they cast upon some readers may
Ensnare their hearts and lead their minds astray.

Comedy:

Suppose I told you I once loved them best!

(Tragedy faints)

I loved them not for that was all in jest.
Suppose for instance you were told to write
A comment on what I will soon recite:
"Be Homer's work your study and delight
Read them by day and meditate at night"

Tragedy:

The one who wrote this sanguine verse is Pope,
Who left the students crying out for hope.
If like a goat the so-called god depraves
Himself then guess how faithful are the slaves!
The Iliad seems to be replete with names
Of gods and heroes like the childish games.
They serve a function if a man should seek
To name his son as do the Greek.
As Saussure puts it, if a language dies
Then death is what this language signifies.

Comedy:

I wonder how you failed your last exam!
'Tis wise of you that you are never calm.

Tragedy:

But when I failed they found me fit to purge
The keen emotions by my piteous surge.
When drawing on the gods and poking fun
Our father, Homer, left us both at one.
Yet still a teacher came to marry me.
How in the world can I on this agree?

Comedy:

I told my teacher when she flapped her hair
"Your ringlet, darling, has no time to spare"
I put a candy right beside her coat,
A candy on the case of which I wrote:
"Be like the candy, which I love and buy,
And like the seed which though concealed gets high"

Comedy:

But still I have another thing to say,
That seems to keenly grieve us all today.

Tragedy:

Is it the thing we talked about before?
Or something else that wounds us even more?

Comedy:

The thing that left me all the more enraged
May well occasion you to be deranged.
At first I thought the losing card is yours,
But what I found is what one most abhors.

Tragedy:

The moment I recall my sordid past
My heart for sorrows makes a great repast.
To rid myself of sorrows, first, I need
To purify my soul of that misdeed.
For one mistake in my apprentice phase
I languished in the chains of pain for days.
Then by reversal I could recognize
What sort of doom this error underlies.
I rue the day I gave myself to those
Who spoiled my life by what their minds impose.

Comedy:

I used to laugh but now I have to weep
Because our sorrows both went deep.

Tragedy:

I'll make my will to you before I die
Because the tragic hero seems but I,
Since neither life nor death I feel I do
Obtain but something found betwixt the two.
(She plucks an eye of hers)

Chorus:

She plucked one eye and let its sister weep
Because no longer could she fall asleep.

Comedy:

The fear invoked by such a pitied soul
Commenced to grow and overcome us all.
To vocalize my pain I say in brief
That none but silence can give voice to grief.
(She stabs her belly and falls dead)

TALAL KASSAD

To His Shameless Mistress: Parody

Come ye mistress! Use your mind!
To that Andrew don't be kind!
Don't resemble those who say:
When deluded "Never Mind"

So regretful is the news
That the primrose is to lose
Glitz and glamour after spring
When it droops yet finds no dews.

No more glistening will you seem
When the sun exhales its beam
On the wondrous roses all
And so burns your peaceful dream.

On the morrow you will see
How the worms will feed on thee.
When you moan your day and say
"Set me free, my Lord, prithee"

Yonder passions will not last,
Since the present will be past.
Seize the day! Don't waste it for
Days are short and passing fast

Guide yourself! Don't let it loose!
Lest they hunt you like a goose,
Lest the wolves should leap on thee
Shed and drink your blood like juice.

Nothing still I have but praise
For the music which he plays
Rhyming verse and singing songs
Which can leave us much ablaze

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