

from *Distant Flames* by Abdelkrim Tabal
translated by Wendy Walker and Rabia Zbakh
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Truth

A coach

bowls along backwards, with us inside it

and the demented coachman

all alone

bowls along in front

.....

who himself reports this hallucination

so you'd better believe him

حَقِيقَةٌ

عَرَبَةٌ

تَجْرِي بِنَا إِلَى الْوَرَاءِ
وَالْحَوْذِي الْمَجْنُونُ
وَحْدَهُ

تَجْرِي بِهِ إِلَى الْأَمَامِ

.....

هُوَ الَّذِي يَقُولُ هَذَا الْهَذْيَانَ
فَصَدِّقُوهُ

Gallantry

A cactus
stamps a dwelling
on the sand's fire
may lodge a rabbit
lost
in the desert

شُعَامَةٌ

صَبَّارٌ
يَنْحَتُ بَيْتاً
فِي نَارِ الرَّمْلِ
قَدْ يُؤْوِي أَرْنبَةً
تَاهَتْ
فِي الصَّحْرَاءِ

أمام النهر

Beside the River

It enveloped me
and took out my heart
and said:
Here you are
a beach on my hands
naked of sands
and winds
Here they are
A small gazelle
bounds over the shells
and the waves
Confess,
you who pretend chivalry,
the guilt of madness.

طوقني
وَشَقَّ مِنْي الْقَلْبَ
ثُمَّ قَالَ :
هَآ أَنْتَ الْآنُ
شَاطِئُ عَلَى يَدِي
مَكْشُوفَ الرَّمْلِ
وَالرِّيَّاحِ
هَاهِي الْآنُ
غَزَالَةٌ صَغِيرَةٌ
تَخْطُرُ فَوْقَ الصَّدَفَاتِ
وَالْأَمْوَاجِ
فَلْتَعْتَرِفْ
يَا مَدْعِي الْفِرَاسَةَ
بِثُّمَةِ الْجُنُونِ

بَيْتٌ

Some

Lost

in the waste or someone's arms

what's the difference

you haven't much of a way with either night

poor guy

choose exile

its boundary the taper

in poetry's house

تِيهَانُ
فِي الْقَفْرِ أَوْ الْكَفِّ
سَوَاءٌ
لَا مَنَجَى لَكَ مِنْ أَحَدِ اللَّيْلِ
يَا حَيْرَانَ
فَتَّخِيرَ مَنْفَى
حَافَتُهُ ... قَنَدِيلُ
فِي بَيْتِ الشُّعْرِ

Excerpt from Wendy Walker and Rabia Zbakh, trans.

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