

# *Between Fleeting Words*

by Mahmoud Darwish

O those who pass between fleeting words  
Carry your names, and go  
Rid our time of your hours, and go  
Steal what you will from the blueness of the sea  
and the sand of memory  
Take what pictures you will, so that you will understand  
That which you never will:  
How a stone from our land builds the ceiling of our sky.

O those who pass between fleeting words  
From you the sword - from us the blood  
From you the steel and fire - from us our flesh  
From you yet another tank - from us stones  
From you tear gas - from us rain  
So take your share of our blood - and go  
For we have to water the martyrs' flowers  
As for us, we have to live as we see fit.

O those who pass between fleeting words  
As bitter dust, go where you wish, but  
Do not pass between us like flying insects  
For we have work to do in our land:  
We have wheat to grow which we water with our bodies' dew  
We have that which does not please you here:  
Stones or partridges  
So take the past, if you wish, to the antiquities market  
We have that which does not please you: we have the future  
And we have things to do in our land.

O those who pass between fleeting words  
Pile your illusions in a deserted well, and go  
Return the hands of time to the law of the golden calf  
Or to the time of the revolver's music!  
For we have that which does not please you here, so go  
And we have what you don't: a bleeding homeland of  
a bleeding people  
A homeland fit for oblivion or memory  
O those who pass between fleeting words  
It is time for you to be gone  
Live wherever you may, but do not live among us  
It is time for you to go  
Die wherever you may, but do not die among us  
For we have work to do in our land  
We have the past here  
We have the first cry of life  
We have the present, the present and the future  
We have this world here, and the hereafter  
So leave our country  
Our land, our sea  
Our wheat, our salt, our wounds  
Everything, and leave the memories of memory  
O those who pass between fleeting words!

