

Syrian coast,
 The big death in Dijle
 when ashes flooded both city and ages?
 «Look Saladin! come back we have!»
 Look for your children!
 From the very beginning the story was pushed
 back into the ages of farce
 One day tragedy may turn to comedy,
 comedy to tragedy...
 Among the daffodils of tragedy
 They ridiculed comic silver.
 They went on wondering:
 What dreams will remain for us
 Knowing Mary is a woman?
 They used to smell of plants
 Sprouting from the walls in spring
 Renewing their wounds,
 Bringing them back from all exiles,
 The sting of buckthorns
 is like the serpent's bite
 The scent of mint is exile coffee...
 An outlet for sentiments at home!
 Arrival!
 Applaud they did:
 Their barking dogs,
 Their bleating goats,
 Their tale-telling grannies,
 The ancient ploughs,
 The sea caressing clusters of
 onions hanging over old weapons.
 What happened happened.
 Husbands jested with mourning widows:
 Stop the tears of mourners, dancers, weepers!
 Let's talk of racing hearts with flying steeds
 towards the tempest of memories,
 Let's talk of Hercules' firmness
 in the last drop of his blood,
 in the madness of mothers,
 And let's be him!
 Let's be anti-Ulysses when the sea is raging
 Let's keep on telling, whenever we tell,
 about the Kurdish leader's call
 to the hesitant Arab:
 Give me a sword!
 I am ready to pray for the prophet,
 for all his kin and wives,
 I am ready to pay the tithe in full.
 ...Much did they laugh:
 Prisons may look nicer than exile gardens
 They saw their windows approaching
 their jesting,
 With roses of fire along the banks
 What happened happened,
 They are ready to jump down stairs;

to open memory safes, chests of clothes
 To brighten door handles now
 prepare the rings then
 With days fingers grew thicker,
 eye sockets redder
 Their faces are no longer there
 on the rust of mirrors and glass
 All right!
 When they arrive after a while
 before the anthem,
 The garden will grow wider
 They will look back:
 We are still ourselves!
 Who can take us back to the desert?
 We'll teach the enemy a lesson:
 In agriculture, how water springs from stone
 In the warrior's helmet we'll plant peppers
 On every slope we'll grow wheat
 For wheat is always broader than
 the borders of stupid empires
 at all times...
 We'll follow the habits of our dead;
 We'll wash years of rust
 off the silver of the trees...
 Our country has no choice but to be ours,
 We have no choice but to be hers
 but to be her fauna, flora and stone
 Our country is our birth
 our grandfathers, our grandchildren
 Lovely kids lightly walking over soft feathers,
 Let's make a violet fence
 around her fire and ashes
 She is ours
 We are hers
 She is heaven
 She is hell
 No difference -
 If we can, we'll teach the enemy pigeon-breeding.
 We'll rest in the afternoon under the
 shady vines
 Surrounded by sleeping cats
 among splinters of light
 Along with dreaming horses,
 with drowsily ruminating cows
 With cocks alert
 For the wind is still full of hens.
 We'll take a siesta under the shady vine tree.
 How tired we are!
 How tired we got of desert and sea air...
 ...On their backs
 They dreamt of arrival
 Because the sea freed their fingers
 and their dead