



## TWO POEMS FROM THE ARABIC

By

*Ayman Eldesouky*

Translation by

Mohamid El Mesry

**Senior Editor CHARLES writes...***In the heart of the Arabic language dwells the heart of poetry. The most beautiful of all holy scriptures is The Quran, which, as the recitations of the Prophet Muhammad (la ila ha illa-llah), forms the cornerstone of Islam. But it is also a masterpiece of poetry and of such hypnotic and affecting power, that any translation falls far short of the original. This is especially true in the case of English translations, which possibly accounts for so many of its misconceptions. The two poems you are about to read spring not just from the heart and mind of this sensitive and gifted poet but from the mysterious soul of the language itself. The translations are exceptional.*

*Five Stars*

**WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes...***Monolingual status is a contradiction in terms--it is a disturbing deficit. Don't you feel a little like an outsider reading anything in translation, like you're missing something, the Bible for instance? On the contrary, some of the idioms crossover with an elegance all their own. The beauty of Ayman Eldesouky's words cause me to wonder how they read and sound in his native tongue: "...nothing is assured except for your skin...get settled in another sky." "...mashed with the Mercury of the velvet girl...for what happened, happened. / And what didn't happen... also happened." Ahhh, the Arabic characters, on the right side of the margins, flow like frosted windows--streaking, swirling and melting frozen hearts.*

*Five Stars*

There is no time.  
So what took you so long?  
Do you gamble with courage at the time of estrangement?  
The date of unity is the date of estrangement  
Do not gamble.  
Those who stick to their courage are still defeated,  
and nothing is assured except for your skin  
exhibited for sale in the museum of hunger  
And your trembling in the lands of ice  
is a proof that the little boats have sunk  
in the bottom of the storm.  
I am telling you.  
Try -for once- to be an insect  
With no skin.  
And get settled in another sky.

لا وقت  
فما الذى أخرجك؟!  
أتقامر بالشجاعة فى زمن القطيعة  
. تاريخ التوحد هو تاريخ القطيعة .  
لا تقامر  
الملازمون شجاعتهم مازالوا مهزومين  
ولا شي أكيد إلا جلدك المعروض للبيع فى متحف الجوع  
وارتعاشتك فى بلاد الثلج دليل على غرق المراكب الصغيرة فى جوف العاصفة  
أقول لك  
جرب أن تكون . مرة . حشرة بلا جلد  
واستوطن سماء أخرى

Never mind that who walks while his eyes  
are on the ground,  
As Picasso said.  
Then.. you can give the secret to that  
Who doesn't see or hear,  
Or even spread the pollen between cities.  
You are the boy who has been fascinated by orange peel since birth,  
And mashed with the Mercury of the velvet girl,  
And stiffness of the illusion  
of a very special homeland  
that **feeds** you.  
Do not gamble with courage;  
for what happened, happened.  
And what didn't happen... also happened.

لا تهتم لمن يمشى وعيناه على الأرض . كما قال بيكاسو.  
حينها .. تستطيع أن تسلم السر لمن لا يري ولا يسمع  
ولا حتي ينشر اللقاح بين المدن  
إنك الولد المفتون بقشر البرتقال منذ الولادة  
ومعجون بزئبق البنت القطيفة  
وصلاية الوهم لوطن خاص جداً يشبع يشبعك  
لا تقامر بالشجاعة  
فما كان كان

**THE POET SPEAKS:** *My poems bring the incomplete world to the readers so the readers can be involved to complete it with their views, visions, and imaginations. A very private experiences could apply to anyone at any time. Memories and real events that coated with deep feelings to form a life of all these moments that I lived with since younger age. Poetry is important to me because it is always the way to shape all these life experiences that touch me and made differences in my life. Poetry, for me, is how to create a parallel universe that I can live in. No direct message or images can go behind the scenes because the scenery is bigger than me, so I am writing in a modern style that is influenced by sounds, indirect details, and the indications of colors, smells, and inner talks. I started reading classical poetry when I was 14 years old. Later I found the modern school in writing reflects my view of the world.*

*The poem speaks of the union of lovers in a substantial poetic meditation on the symbolic power of the four elements earth, fire, water, and air. The dichotomy of body and soul appears frequently through the body of the poem that carries the deep emotions of events that happened in the childhood. A third person involved in this poem as the person who would deliver the message. This poem tries to create different layers of meanings and tries to find the lost morals by presenting philosophical thoughts with words that are carry different meanings. It is a mirror of family values, love, and courage. For example, the symbol of the blood here is a key to sacrifice what stands in his way to reach all these lost values.*

**AUTHOR BIO:** Ayman Eldesouky is an Egyptian writer who moved to Canada in 2016. His writing focuses on memories, nostalgia, and the daily life experiences of working-class people in rural Egypt. He has a bachelor's degree in Arabic and Islamic studies from Cairo University and a master's degree in Comparative Literature from Ain Shams University. He has published a book of poetry and several literary critiques and belongs to the modern school in literature. These poems are from his book "Like a Field in the Season of the Locusts" which won the Poetry Prize in the Middle East in 2001.