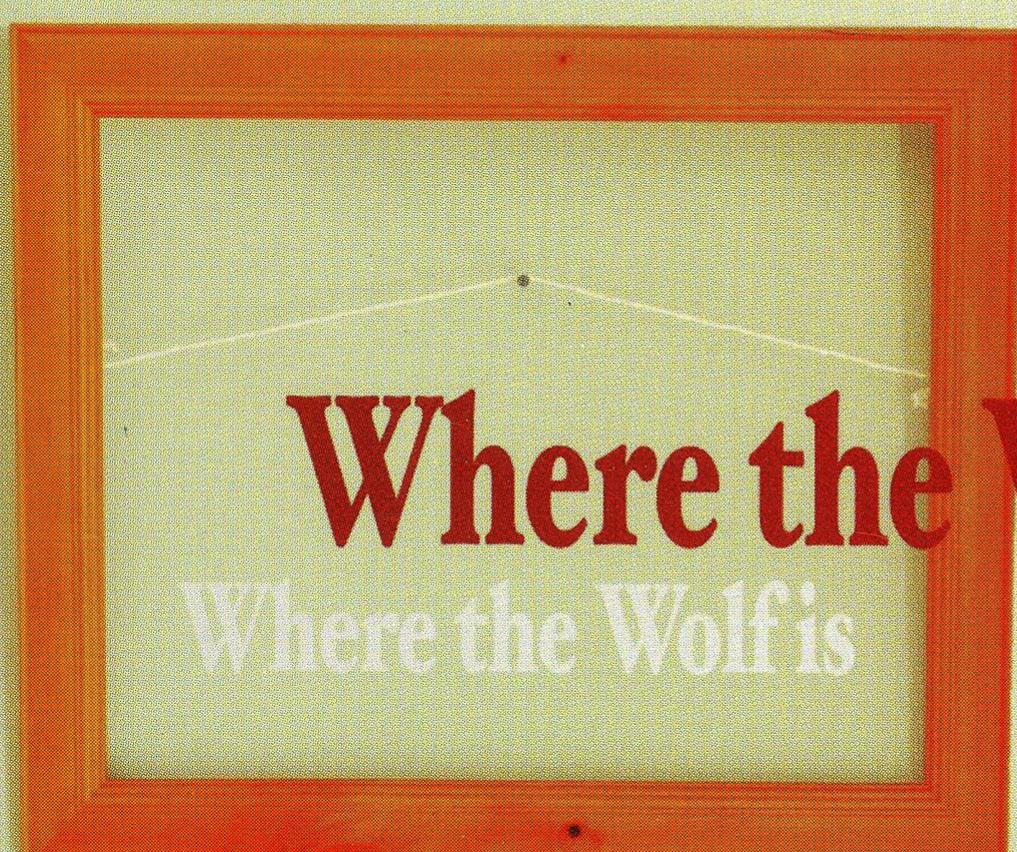
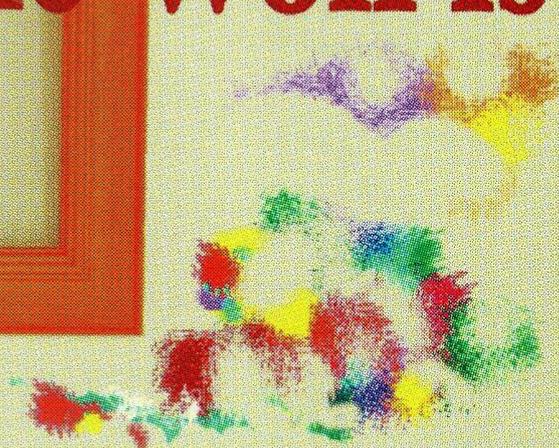


Shawki Moslemani



Where the Wolf is

Where the Wolf is



Translated by Noel Abdulahad & Raghid Nahhas

Where the Wolf is

by

Shawki Moslemani

Translated by

Noel Abdulahad
&
Raghid Nahhas

Kalimat 2004

كَلِمَات

Kalimat

P.O. Box 242, Cherrybrook, NSW 2126, Australia.

raghid@ozemail.com.au

First published 2004

Copyright © Kalimat

All rights reserved. This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced without the prior consent of the publisher.

Cover design by Fassih Keiso

Text designed and typeset by Kalimat

Printed by Prima Quality Printing

Bound by Perfectly Bound

The National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Moslemani, Shawki.

Where the wolf is.

ISBN 0 9756872 1 2

I. Abdulahad, Noel. II. Nahhas, Raghid. III. Title.

892.71

Our thanks are due to **Maureen Ten** who reviewed the manuscript. We are also grateful to **Chafic Ataya** who provided many useful suggestions, and in some cases we adopted his changes that contributed to significant improvements to the quality of the translations. We are particularly indebted to **Sophie Masson** who reviewed the final draft.

The original Arabic collection was published by *Multi Printing & Publishing*, Sydney, Australia 2002. The Arabic title is (حيث الذئب), *haythul thi'b*.

Noel Abdulahad & Raghid Nahhas

CONTENTS

Swiftly	9
A Meal	10
Deficiency	11
Twins	12
A Hole	13
Ashes	14
Hope	15
A Dance	16
Void	17
On the Edge	18
In Your Midst	19
Where the Wolf is	20
The Passer-by	22
Pain	23
The Night	24
Tenderness	25
Sand	26
Let in an Arrow	28
Where to?	29
Novelty	30
Vision	31
A Myth	32
Coal	33
The Reason Why	34
A Return	35
A City	36
Stones of Torn Souls	38

The Colour of the Glass	39
A Tree	40
An Eye in Disguise	41
Again	42
Blood	43
Smoke	44
A Bird in Town	45
The Eternal Egg	46
The Dawn	47
A Glance	48
The Race	49
An Idea	50
A Garden	51
The Absentee	52
Another Bird	53
Phantoms	54
Other Skies	55
We Almost	56
A Legal Opinion	57
Emptiness of the Cage	58
Immanence	59
Eternity	60
The Response of Light	61

*And now
he draws a frame
for his absence*

Swiftly

Iron and debris
rain on metal sheets,
a dead cat
and a bird traversing swiftly.

A Meal

Are they birds of prey
or birds of slumber
pecking my head –

patiently
and thoroughly?

Deficiency

It is the weather...
walking on two crutches
breathing oxygen
and carbon dioxide
through two nostrils.

Twins

The night and the day
under one roof
sometimes they play
sometimes they run
or hide and rave:

a stone
a flower

a moon
a snake.

A Hole

Still he lies down
the walls are bending
the temples blacking out

the countries are far away
the mountains search for a foothold

mice and angels...
trembling, on the sand

what would he do
to amuse himself
if not drilling his heart.

Ashes

Sitting on wonderment
he collapses

Coiled on yellow
on a rock
on dryness

Ashes.

Hope

He sleeps hoping
the wounded around him
calm down,
the wind eases
the dead depart

For so long
ships sailed
in his head
and now
he wants to rest.

A Dance

A painting
drips tears and swords

A witch
inserts the lust of life into a doll

A statue
strikes the air
with a pickaxe

And this damsel
sketches her face a smile
and dances with the idol.

Void

An echo
 inherits the scream
A void
 inherits the wind

The wind
 erases the footprints
and leaves no path.

On the Edge

From my fleeting glance
a crow flies away

I go on chopping wood.

In Your Midst

A blacksmith
 hammers in my head
A painter
 colours below my eyes
A madman
 exits from me
and another knocks
 to enter

So, I ask you O judges:
 do not call me 'you...'
I am a multi-man
and do not know all my clan
including the criminal

But once you sentence me
the culprit would be
 in your midst.

Where the Wolf is

My bird too has not returned
from its journey

Silently I search for a star that
once beamed, and vanished

I witnessed
the slaughtering of the butterflies,
quivering muddy dreams
in strange lanes,
ants pushing carriages and
the night watchmen running away
with the cargo.

Recklessly I mend the holes

The one obsessed by
the passion of the sun
is my comrade
The limb-crippled hungry tiger

is my comrade
Those injected with forgetfulness
are my comrades

And the desert is mine

The green rain is pouring
over the slopes where
the wolf awaits
a bird that has not returned
I come out of the dust
and pull along my blind men.

The Passer-by

A wavering line between two points
where the passer-by grows old
and his hair turns grey

in the mid of the road,
light and darkness

when his footstep becomes dark,
his veins are injected with dryness.

Pain

Would the moon climb not the night
and the wind forsake its singing!

Would the branches wave not
to the horizon
and the eye no longer colour
your bearings!

The Night

Rising up,
he glanced at the dreariness
dangling from his eyes
He realised it was
the night...

Tenderness

He bends tenderly
over a piece of paper,
and babbles rivulets.

Sand

Nothing under these sands

the wreck!

The ship of the soul

A familiar smell
comes out from a stranger

There is a cloud in the sky,
yet the painting does not pour its rain

A bird perches on a tree,
yet cannot be seen by a blind eye

I close my eyes –
I know

A donkey conspires with a mare
to produce a mule

The cockroach
wheezes in summer's ear
to part

The shark is in the city
as in the sea
what are you looking for?

The words? –
I am the void

He has two eyes,
but the others are
the ones who see

I search for something
thinking that
it stands before me
it has never stood before me.

Let in an Arrow

Be patient till the sun sets...
the water... the water...

The sun sets
and only little dreams rise...
drive them to the sea

Give all your love
let an arrow sink in your heart.

Where to?

Is it fair that a garden disappears?
Is seeing God forbidden?
It is possible for a hen to disappear
a camel
a bank...
but a garden?

Is it fair that I depart
and the footpath disappears?

Where is the footpath?

Novelty

The novelty is
a paper
that falls.

Vision

I smash the mirror
to see you.

A Myth

Oh how desirable his face
makes the face of a deer
Oh how slim his eyes
make a stranger look

It is but a myth
all that is built on sand.

Coal

Because he is short on bread
they burdened his face
with weariness
and because he
loves the sun and
the trees
he was hung
by his legs

The Reason Why

He speaks of loveliness to them
no one listens to him

Only then
he dies out.

A Return

Say: Ah...

Ah!

Lie down...

He lies down!

Cross your arms...

He crosses his arms!

Curl...

He curls!

Close your eyes – sleep...

He sleeps.

A City

1

A bird drags its blood thread along,
winter veils are there alone
and passers-by
would not even look.

2

Winter raps the windows
with kindness and dreariness.
Birds shrivel beneath the trees,
hearkening to distant voices.

They came down to the city
from faraway mountains
they became its dry grass,
its lanes and its torn pictures
on the walls
Deep in their hearts
they heard the stones of the houses
roll down from the mountains.

Stones of Torn Souls

A cry goes astray into
the explosion
deep down tumble the dead

blood between two worlds, a thread
between two wounds
a last tune
a last glance

the wreck...
is the stones of torn souls.

The Colour of the Glass

The streets bite my feet
On a bench in the storm,
the sea lies alone.

the souls emerge
with severed limbs
moaning
laughing

the glass colours my blood
as the wolf devours me.

A Tree

Stark naked
save from a sparrow hawk
perched on the tip of
this dreary scene.

An Eye in Disguise

Thirst sleeps in the desert
heads stoop to the sand
venom
and a fang behind the track

Hold on to the tree.
Watch!

The spears... the spears...
The claws... the claws...

A thread of blood
and an eye in disguise.

Again

The frost breaks down
the sea...
again,
no rain tonight.

Blood

A creeping is
stealthily listening
to creeping.

Smoke

Is it the horizon or I
who is afar?

This evening...
a thief under my window sleeps

This night
is asleep

This crow flies away
from someone's head
smoke is on
the island

Locust...
in this sky

Every night...
an invitation to a last supper.

A Bird in Town

There is a bird from the East
in town —
alive, because it is singing.

The Eternal Egg

Poison suckles poison
a rock feeds a rock

feel the pulse
tenderly
and
carefully
pierce
the earth's crust

the whiteness... the whiteness...

rise up to the vibrations,
rise up to the eternal egg.

The Dawn

A battle with
the male of life.

A Glance

Even in the deepest depths
where darkness is gloomy
life nestles the young
tinges their fingers
and when they sleep
it covers them
with a glance.

The Race

Sing -
I give you the horse.

An Idea

Skylarks fly
towards his bliss
rocks tremble...
as if the stranger
bears for the first time
an idea flickering
in his head
and a chisel.

A Garden

The wind
touches many faces
where the air
colours the trees and
cleanses the rain
Liberty blossoms
and children frolic
with spirits that
strayed away.

The Absentee

He uplifts the water of the dawn
plants the spirit of friendliness
beckons to the islands -
they respond

He says:

O sun, I am your flesh
O sky, I am your Eve
O river, I am your long history

I am the fruit of the earth
and the earth is my fruit

He begins his song with
a splendidous day.

Another Bird

Its heart sees you
its waves reach your lakes

It says:
let your waters flow down
irrigate your stars
nurse your ewes
that are close to
the cradle.

Phantoms

Their life-span is vertical

they make a horizon
for their eyelashes
and glide into
their phantoms.

Other Skies

It is chilling outside
birds paint words inside
and above us,
other skies.

We Almost

A hand stretches...
an enchanted voice
A dance by a river

a flock of doves
soars high

We almost draw faces and
disclose names
We almost rub our voices –
echo upon echo.

A Legal Opinion

Surely...
the first glance is not a sin
but if God shines in my heart
and in my millionth glance
how would you then judge me?

Emptiness of the Cage

She left,
injected her veins with absence
sparrows chirped inside her head
and she surrendered to slumber

Dina...
you are the song
the sheep seek your slopes

the flower pots on your window sill
are verdant fields
and shades dancing for the one
returning from his wandering.

Immanence

They will not be ahead of you —
your footstep is windborne
filling the Universe.

Eternity

Ashes...
yet you rise
like the phoenix
from the ashes.

The Response of Light

I ask the dawn
to wake you not
and to climb the ladder
as would the rose breathe.

*...and the story-teller
does not know when
he himself becomes the
story, and how!*

Shawki Moslemani's poetry explores the human condition, in the style he has made his own: using his words as 'flashes' of expression, short in length, long in effect. He is a poet of impulse akin to a sudden throwing of a pebble, causing ripples in the receiving waters. When the ripples dissipate, they regenerate themselves as echoes in our innermost appreciation of the meanings they reveal. When the echoes dissipate, they carry us with them into an outermost world of Sufism and mysticism. But Moslemani's twilight zone is where the material and the spiritual become one.

There is a great affinity in Moslemani for "Cawnin", his birthplace village in Lebanon, where every rock on every hill is a poem singing the tales of the good earth and the good people Moslemani identifies with. However, though the natural images in Moslemani may well spring from the landscape of his village, his poetry is that of a man with a deep sense of universality. It is a universality which is always present, despite the pain apparent in his attempt to reconcile his village inheritance of spontaneity and simplicity with the sophisticated state of mind into which he has managed to elevate himself philosophically and intellectually.

The Publisher

Noel Abdulahad is a writer, critic and translator who lives in USA. He is renowned for his translation of Gibran's *The Prophet*, considered the best. He is an adviser to *Kalimat*.

Raghid Nahhas is a writer, reviewer, translator and publisher who lives in Sydney, Australia. He is the Editor of *Kalimat*, an international periodical of creative writing in English and Arabic.