

<http://hallofpeople.com/en/bio/Hikmet.php>

Nazim Hikmet

5 Selected poems

The most beautiful sea

The most beautiful sea
hasn't been crossed yet.
The most beautiful child
hasn't grown up yet.
The most beautiful days
we haven't seen yet.
And the most beautiful words
I wanted to tell you
I haven't said yet...

Let's give the world to the children

Let's give the world to the children
just for one day
like a balloon in bright and striking colours
to play with
let them play singing among the stars
let's give the world to the children
like a huge apple
like a warm loaf of bread
at least for one day
let them have enough
let's give the world to the children
at least for one day
let the world learn friendship
children will get the world from our hands
they'll plant immortal trees

Hymn To Life

The hair falling on your forehead
suddenly lifted.

Suddenly something stirred on the ground.

The trees are whispering
in the dark.

Your bare arms will be cold.

Far off, where we can't see,
the moon must be rising.

It hasn't reached us yet,
slipping through the leaves
to light up your shoulder.

But I know

a wind comes up with the moon.

The trees are whispering.

Your bare arms will be cold.

From above,
from the branches lost in the dark,
something dropped at your feet.

You moved closer to me.

Under my hand your bare flesh is like the fuzzy skin of a fruit.

Neither a song of the heart nor "common sense"--

before the trees, birds, and insects,

my hand on my wife's flesh

is thinking.

Tonight my hand can't read or write.
Neither loving nor unloving...
It's the tongue of a leopard at a spring,
a grape leaf, a wolf's paw.
To move, breathe, eat, drink.
My hand is like a seed splitting open underground.
Neither a song of the heart nor "common sense,"
neither loving nor unloving.
My hand thinking on my wife's flesh
is the hand of the first man.
Like a root that finds water underground,
it says to me:
"To eat, drink, cold, hot, struggle, smell, color--
not to live in order to die but to die to live..."

And now
as red female hair blows across my face,
as something stirs on the ground,
as the trees whisper in the dark,
and as the moon rises far off
where we can't see,
my hand on my wife's flesh
before the trees, birds, and insects,
I want the right of life,
of the leopard at the spring, of the seed splitting open--
I want the right of the first man.

Translated. by Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk (1993)

From poemhunter.com/

On Living

I.

Living is no laughing matter:

you must live with great seriousness

like a squirrel, for example--

I mean without looking for something beyond and above living,

I mean living must be your whole occupation.

Living is no laughing matter:

you must take it seriously,

so much so and to such a degree

that, for example, your hands tied behind your back,

your back to the wall,

or else in a laboratory

in your white coat and safety glasses,

you can die for people--

even for people whose faces you've never seen,

even though you know living

is the most real, the most beautiful thing.

I mean, you must take living so seriously

that even at seventy, for example, you'll plant olive trees--

and not for your children, either,

but because although you fear death you don't believe it,

because living, I mean, weighs heavier.

II

Let's say you're seriously ill, need surgery--
which is to say we might not get
from the white table.

Even though it's impossible not to feel sad
about going a little too soon,
we'll still laugh at the jokes being told,
we'll look out the window to see it's raining,
or still wait anxiously
for the latest newscast ...

Let's say we're at the front--
for something worth fighting for, say.

There, in the first offensive, on that very day,
we might fall on our face, dead.

We'll know this with a curious anger,
but we'll still worry ourselves to death
about the outcome of the war, which could last years.

Let's say we're in prison
and close to fifty,
and we have eighteen more years, say,
before the iron doors will open.

We'll still live with the outside,
with its people and animals, struggle and wind--
I mean with the outside beyond the walls.

I mean, however and wherever we are,
we must live as if we will never die.

III

This earth will grow cold,
a star among stars
and one of the smallest,
a gilded mote on blue velvet--
I mean this, our great earth.
This earth will grow cold one day,
not like a block of ice
or a dead cloud even
but like an empty walnut it will roll along
in pitch-black space ...
You must grieve for this right now
--you have to feel this sorrow now--
for the world must be loved this much
if you're going to say "I lived" ...

Translated. by Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk (1993)

From poemhunter.com/

Don Quixote

The knight of immortal youth
at the age of fifty found his mind in his heart
and on July morning went out to capture
the right, the beautiful, the just.

Facing him a world of silly and arrogant giants,
he on his sad but brave Rocinante.
I know what it means to be longing for something,
but if your heart weighs only a pound and sixteen ounces,
there's no sense, my Don, in fighting these senseless windmills.

But you are right, of course, Dulcinea is your woman,
the most beautiful in the world;
I'm sure you'll shout this fact
at the face of street-traders;
but they'll pull you down from your horse
and beat you up.
But you, the unbeatable knight of our curse,
will continue to glow behind the heavy iron visor
and Dulcinea will become even more beautiful.

Translated by Taner Baybars

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