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The Rest of A Life

Mahmoud Darwish

Translations by Catherine Cobham

If someone said to me: ‘You’re going to die here this evening so what will you do in the time that remains?’ I would say ‘I will look at my watch drink a glass of juice and crunch on an apple and observe at length an ant that has found her day’s supply of food
Then look at my watch: there is still time to shave and take a long shower. A thought will occur to me: One should look nice to write so I’ll wear something blue I will sit until noon, alive, at my desk not seeing a trace of colour in the words white, white, white
I will prepare my last meal pour wine into two glasses: for me and an unexpected guest then take a nap between two dreams but the sound of my snoring will wake me Then I will look at my watch: there is still time to read I will read a canto of Dante and half a mu‘allaqa and see how my life goes from me into other people, and not wonder who will take its place‘ ‘Just like that?’ ‘Just like that’ ‘Then what?’

'I will comb my hair
and throw the poem, this poem
in the rubbish bin
put on the latest shirt from Italy
say my final farewell to myself with a backing of Spanish violins
then
walk
to the graveyard!'