

Ashraf Fayadh **Frida Kahlo's Moustache**

Translated from the Arabic by Fady Joudah

I will ignore the smell of clay, the reproach of rain, and the choke
that has long settled in my chest
and I will search for an appropriate condolence of my situation that doesn't permit
me
to explain your lips in the manner I'd hoped for

or to shake dew drops off your reddish petals
or to lessen the intensity of the obsession that overwhelms me whenever I realize
you're not next to me now and won't be...I'm forced to justify my position
to the silence that night punishes me with

Pretend that the earth is silent, just as we see it from afar,
and that all what happened between us was no more
than a poor prank that shouldn't have gone this far

What's your idea about the days I usually spend without you?
about my words that used to rapidly evaporate
about my heavy pain
and the knots that had sedimented inside my thorax like dried up algae

I forgot to tell you...that in the practical sense of the word
I've grown used to your absence
and that my wishes have lost their way to your desires
and my memory has begun to corrode

And that I still chase light, not because I want to see...the dark always frightens
even when we're used to it

Is my apology for everything that happened while I was trying to make up
excuses for you enough?
Is it enough for the times jealousy raged in some place inside me
or when disappointment ruined yet another of my dark days

And for my repetition that justice will always suffer the disturbances of
menstruation
and that love is a backward impotent man at the end of his days

I will be forced to trick my memory
and pretend that I have no problem sleeping
and rip all the remaining questions
the questions that now search for persuasive answers
after all punctuation has been dropped
for purely personal reasons

Let the mirror explain to you how beautiful you are
Remove my pile of dust, my words
Breathe deeply, remember how much I loved you and how
the whole thing turned into a brief electrocution
that almost caused a great fire in an empty warehouse

The sun is extremely polite when it comes to covering her mouth while yawning
The sun doesn't know how to impose its total control over the earth
the same fate the sun has with darkness, the sun
has no choice but to resist the dark, even if Pluto
has lost its qualifications to remain among the vertiginous planets

The moon has a different take on imposing its will over the sea
And the sea can swallow whatever creatures it desires and lay claim to more
land
on account of global warming, the punctured ozone, a woman's right
to wear a bikini, and the temptation of birds with the riches of fish

I will no longer be pain pills for your monthly period
and won't enjoy your exceptional conversation while you prepare for a long nap
or when you want to offload your anger
or while you spend some lovely time in a bar packed with lovers of Jazz

I won't be able to sleep enough or explain Nietzsche's moustache
or persuade you that Imad's work is a unique experiment in art

I will busy myself with normalizing relations between earth and water
in order to obstruct fire on its way to becoming an ambassador of good will

Only then will the air cease to appear presentable
as it dries out your underwear on your laundry line

I walk in the street of the inexpressible and question the indifferent rain drops
I try to remove the rust that's stuck in my throat
How many times should I refer to the wind's guidebook to decipher your moods?

How many words have I silenced to spare you the smell of disappointment
that my American cigarette blows?

I won't be the piggybank you break whenever you run out of funds
and I won't include as poetic chore an amorous description of your eyes
because your eyes, in the final analysis, are more fatal than those
that ruined Jareer's mind, or more poetic than Sayyab's palm tree groves

Your eyes are precisely the way angels prostrated to Adam,
and I exclude Satan, naturally, for rhetorical reasons

The world this morning resembles my stomach with its ulcers, resembles
the ache that spends its weekends in my head, resembles
the heaps of broken glass that fill my memory

The world is no longer alright since I've stopped worrying about glass
or the reply letter to my letter or Mrs. Clinton's failure to lead the Democratic
Party

Don't look for me, I will be there
with every sip of coffee
and when you relax at a spa, or want to laugh or cry, or if you desire
to toss yourself into someone's arms, or when you can't
resist your insomnia or your mobile phone
that didn't ring during your sleep
or when in the unconsciousness of writing, or when you want to talk
or while watching a movie regardless of its quality
and when you tickle the ground as you walk-exercise
and when you hear our song, the one we have yet to agree on

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