

Stoned on Ritualistic Bullshit

El Habib Louai

2016

They shall all tell you, one by one, when you cross them, collectively individually, in court lobbies or hotel lounges, in schools or inside mosques. They shall tell you only what they shall tell you, in their Abyssinian rhetoric of generational apology. They shall tell you the same old bullshit they vomited before, and after the great flood of the great bullshit out of the great bowels into the great fucked up world of ours, they shall tell you only what they shall tell you:

You should praise your dear Lord night and day
for having granted you the ease of breathing through one nostril.

You should praise your dear Lord night and day
for having sent enough sugar and mint tea —
for bringing sour milk and wheat couscous to your table.

You should praise your dear Lord night and day
for the free birds that have not yet frozen.

You should praise your dear Lord night and day
for those who have not yet been gassed in their chambers;
for the sky that still abundantly pisses on your patches;
for the army that still reluctantly protects you!

I do not blame you
priests of the unconscious

have turned you all, one by one
into widowed Mona Lisas with mustaches
& there you sit in penumbras
plunged into the noise of your flesh
afraid of Lawyers' offices,
psychiatrists' couches,
the neighborhood police station
Did you decide to die the death
of a taintless mayor?
the one who promised to wash
the neighborhood of its despair?
did you decide to befriend the treasurer who fattened
his stepchildren on Urban Household Finances?
or did you surrender to the bachelor accountant who clipped
our foliage with his economy of mystical needs?
I do not blame you
for having loosened your ties
when your representatives offer tailored intellect
how many of you became gay for pay
& sat in the corners of love waiting
for a bridge to the other side?
how many of you drank embryonic hopes in a café au lait cup?
how many of you slept on post-strike discussions
to wake up with another historical hangover?
they shall tell you, one by one, what
only they shall tell you
do not bother Late in December
roam the streets of life

read newspapers in a strange town
& drink your cinnamon coffee
pretend you are used to the explosions
celebrate your exhaustion
Who would recognize you after all?!

El Habib Louai is an Amazigh poet, teacher, translator and musician from Taroudant, Morocco. He focuses on the Beats and revolutionary poetry in English, which he translates and performs accompanied by Afro Jazz and Amazigh Northern African music. His first collection of poems, *Mrs. Jones Will Now Know: Poems of a Desperate Rebel*, was published in the U.S. in 2015.

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