

We Were Missing A Present—Mahmoud Darwish

Let's go as we are:
a free woman
and a loyal friend,
let's go together on two different paths
let's go as we are united
and separate,
with nothing hurting us
not the divorce of doves or the coldness between the hands
and not the wind around the church . . .
What bloomed of almond trees wasn't enough.
So smile for the almonds to blossom more
between the butterflies of two dimples

And soon there will be a new present for us.
If you look back you will see only
the exile of your looking back:
your bedroom,
the courtyard willow,
the river behind the glass buildings,
and the café of our trysts . . . all of it, all
preparing to become exile, so
let's be kind!

Let's go as we are:
a free woman
and a friend loyal to her flutes.
Our time wasn't enough to grow old together
walk wearily to the cinema
witness the end of Athens's war with her neighbors
and see the banquet of peace between Rome and Carthage
about to happen. Because soon
the birds will relocate from one epoch to another:
Was this path only dust
in the shape of meaning, and did it march us
as if we were a passing journey between two myths,
so the path is inevitable, and we are inevitable
as a stranger sees himself in the mirror of another stranger?
"No, this is not my path to my body"
"No cultural solutions for existential concerns"
"Wherever you are my sky
is real"
"Who am I to give you back the previous sun and moon"
Then let's be kind . . .

Let's go, as we are:
a free lover
and her poet.
What fell of December snow
wasn't enough, so smile
for snow to card its cotton on the Christian's prayer,
we will soon return to our tomorrow, behind us,
where we were young in love's beginning,
playing Romeo and Juliet
and learning Shakespeare's language . . .
The butterflies have fluttered out of sleep
as a mirage of a swift peace
that adorns us with two stars
and kills us in the struggle over the name
between two windows
so, let's go
and let's be kind

Let's go, as we are:
a free woman
and a loyal friend,
let's go as we are. We came
with the wind from Babylon
and we march to Babylon . . .
My travel wasn't enough
for the pines to become in my trace
an utterance of praise to the southern place.
We are kind here. Northerly

is our wind, and our songs are southerly.
Am I another you
and you another I?
“This isn’t my path to my freedom’s land”
this isn’t my path to my body
and I won’t be “I” twice
since my yesterday’s taken my tomorrow’s place
and I have split into two women
so I am not of the east
and I am not of the west,
nor am I an olive tree shading two verses in the Quran
then, let’s go.
“No collective solutions for personal scruples”
it wasn’t enough that we be together
to be together . . .
we were missing a present to see
where we were. Let’s go as we are,
a free woman
and an old friend
let’s go on two separate paths
let’s go together,
and let’s be kind . . .