

No More And No Less—Mahmoud Darwish

I am a woman. No more and no less  
I live my life as it is  
thread by thread  
and I spin my wool to wear, not  
to complete Homer's story, or his sun  
and I see what I see  
as it is, in its shape,  
though I stare every once  
in a while in its shade  
to sense the pulse of defeat,  
and I write tomorrow  
on yesterday's sheets: there's no sound  
other than echo.  
I love the necessary vagueness in  
what a night traveler says to the absence  
of birds over the slopes of speech  
and above the roofs of villages  
I am a woman, no more and no less

The almond blossom sends me flying,  
in March, from my balcony  
in longing for what the faraway says:  
"Touch me and I'll bring my horses to the springs."  
I cry for no clear reason, and I love you  
as you are, not as a strut  
nor in vain  
and from my shoulders a morning rises onto you  
and falls into you, when I embrace you, a night.  
But I am neither one nor the other  
no, I am not a sun or a moon  
I am a woman, no more and no less

So be the Qyss of longing,  
if you wish. As for me  
I like to be loved as I am  
not as a color photo  
in the paper, or as an idea  
composed in a poem amid the stags . . .  
I hear Laila's faraway scream  
from the bedroom: Do not leave me  
a prisoner of rhyme in the tribal nights  
do not leave me to them as news . . .  
I am a woman, no more and no less

I am who I am, as  
you are who you are: you live in me  
and I live in you, to and for you  
I love the necessary clarity of our mutual puzzle  
I am yours when I overflow the night  
but I am not a land  
or a journey  
I am a woman, no more and no less

And I tire  
from the moon's feminine cycle  
and my guitar falls ill  
string  
by string  
I am a woman,  
no more  
and no less!