

The Shadow—Mahmoud Darwish

The shadow, neither male nor female,
ashen, even if I set it on fire . . .
It follows me, it grows then shrinks.
I was walking. It was walking.
I sat. It sat.
I ran. It ran.
I said: Let me trick it and take off my kohl coat,
it copied me and took off its ashen coat . . .
I turned onto the side road
it turned onto the side road.
I said: Let me trick it and walk out of my city's sunset
then I saw it walking ahead of me
into the sunset of another city . . .
I said: I'll come back leaning on two crutches
then it returned leaning on two crutches
so I said: I'll carry it on my shoulders,
but it resisted . . .
I said: Then, I'll follow it to deceive it.
I'll follow this parrot of shapes and mock it
copying what copies me
for the like to stumble on the like
and I would not see it, nor it see me.