

Aryan Kaganof

Centó for David wa Maahlamela

Dear David,

perhaps you were not yet born  
when poetry ambushed you  
and fed you poison only  
to find cement  
pavements  
have no  
lips  
to carry  
her pots of  
crucified tears  
cracked, and leave  
them broken like omens  
that speak without voices  
of the only viscous  
earthly love you  
ever tasted

If only  
you  
had a  
pair of  
scissors to  
be sprinkled  
with holy water  
undressing withered  
leaves the hot-headed  
word empress and no one

understands  
there is nothing to negotiate

Dear David,

I'm here in your country  
for only a week hoping  
the sky will weep  
for me and I  
hate it  
when  
you  
tell me  
such truth  
I dislike to hear,  
truth warmer, I should  
say, than death because you  
never allowed it to happen again

the entire truth is eaten without porridge  
or rice and no piano shall speak again nothing  
is sweet about this sea

Dear David,

Like a Bible about to be read  
with all big books it read  
one cold afternoon you  
said love is a step  
mother, they say  
sculpt me a  
new heart  
make use  
of the  
things  
around you  
and yes, the  
garbage truck  
as if to say: people  
are clothes, your clothes

You've worn many people in the  
past, you say I had hoped that this  
common thing would collect us perhaps  
you'll then admit you said nothing about  
yourself or your  
sins.

Dear David,

It is not yet my turn,  
I will die another day  
the impossible day.  
No need for ambi  
valent thoughts  
I do it on a  
piece of  
paper  
with  
nobody  
and nothing  
in my head so  
i can speak  
melodies  
of

repentance

You  
told me  
it's too early.  
I see your mole  
fingers digging me  
out of the grave. to you  
i return in needles of winter  
raindrops because i will take no  
pen nor paper  
when I go

Dear David,

You know the essence of wounds  
My God is a tongue that speaks  
with lips sealed and stitched.  
(S)He knows (s)he will soon  
be bread  
to worms

those without  
shadows are here  
again. their words are  
always dressed to kill in echoes.  
People have ice memories in this world  
of machines double pay double  
pay

Dear David,

I remain  
an ordinary  
poet and when  
the night shadows  
fall I return to my  
makeshift poems I call  
home. I took it to the street  
I became against war and we bleed  
each time  
we smile

In this country,  
it is not the smile  
that matters, released  
behind closed doors does  
it even have a name? Is that  
even important? You are a literate  
someone. You live here You live here

Dear David,

Lucifer used to envy you, I heard  
maybe, just maybe "From ashes to ashes..."  
A diamond is forever –  
they were told especially when they return from their  
armpit lovers now that his pockets are suffocated by silver  
and gold, how skeletal is the line between patriotism and arrogance  
and I walked Dear David, it's a matter of life and debt, we  
collided with the midnight and we were satisfied to  
stomp the soil and clothe us with the red  
blanket. I could count bones of what  
used to be poetry. Dear David,  
I want to come to you to  
meet the tree that  
fructed you with  
dirges

perhaps  
this is what  
the poem means  
perhaps there are  
no rules and if you  
were to be amputated  
with heavy nonsense  
even if you were  
stillborn again  
poetry, real  
poetry,  
will  
still  
walk barefoot  
on ghetto paper,  
content, have you  
discovered your  
uncommon  
gift  
yet?

Dear David,

How can death  
intimidate you?  
Everything is dressed  
with dust even the white  
linen poems you washed not  
so long ago though your heart  
was full of worms. do the dead know any distance?

Dear David,  
Your breath is a verse  
There's a poem in your  
skull Where the sun  
cannot steal  
the marrow  
of your  
bones

anymore.

Sincerely,

AK