

Aryan Kaganof

Cento 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,

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