

The “7” Wings of Hassan Sharif

By Yousif Abuloz

[1]

- We stop in the evening outside hotel building and the winter winds storm us, for the wintry winds there is a special way of storming pulling me from shoulders and throwing me away to the back. Where do winds of winter throw you personally?
- We go to “Humphrey’s” garden like two noble masters of the Middle ages. We great in the evening Humphrey’s coat hanged on a wooden clothes hanger.
- I meditate for a while
- What is on the clothes hanger is not just a coat. It is “Humphrey” himself but he is molten inside leaving to us this garden.
- It has now become a bit of old garden. It is because we no more greet any coat, also some places do not bear to welcome the artist’s soul seen its thorns, indeed thronful!!
- We shall remember our friends in the neighbourhood, and we enter our fingers inside wine pots, and they turned red for wine’s biting effect, even they were full of lovely rings...Is it really a cigarette, and she is the woman I kissed most, even she is the one whom I (Kissed the whole night)...

“We shall enter Humphrey’s garden
and as for two cups (of wine)
We were not fatigous your night guard
two cups – no more, and we quit....
Open to us gas tin for a while
Oh! you uncle,
You night guard,
Half of our life here for you at your wooden house, and another part over there,
We spend it in job, and sleeping,
For the sake of our works in writing and drawing,
Oh! you uncle, open to us gas tin
One day we’ll draw your hands with charcoal,
when you change your home,
And work in an ancient mine,
And when you die we throw a prose poem on your grave,
For my friend has no roses,
And me no gardens on my way,
Two cups bring us...
Then we quit you coalminer
Open to us the gas tin
And paint our fingers with music.

[2]

- You were very precise in your words when you once told me: “some of your writings resemble to painting works” this is true but now many great oil painters – you fellow – in the writing field they paint and they were malicious and opportune...many a painter has walls waiting in line to be painted...and as for me if I tan leather in the most extreme degree of my work as a “painter !!” I am neither a painter nor a tanner but I look to tanner’s work as poetic.

- Sometimes you visit old towns, Its houses were olden and its street lamps or chandeliers. In such visits you wake up very early in the morning as unusual, and perhaps it is a great pleasure to wake up early in a town unknown to you, and take your coffee amid people whom you don’t know, probably train workers or seamen...perhaps strangers as you follow thick doves in the squares and the falling mist, observe buried ladies perfumes calling taxies to stop...then you say to yourself: “they were old towns”

- You were talking a while ago about a tanner’s job.

- In these towns you will likely come across poetry works and you might call them works of art – when you leave the coffee-house and go about walking in narrow streets, and old markets roofed with decayed zinc or wood...you observe more these skilled labourers with deep features...

- There were those who cut skin and make bags out of it or swords and knives covers, there were those who polish scraps in order to create a solid lion...and in a certain corner some make chairs, saddles, or a donkey saddle cushions...you get fascinated or interested in these works, and you start looking for someone to make a horse’s lace...and ask yourself:

- How could a lace maker do it? Does he take measurements for horse head? And its jaws...neck width? Or does he makes lace only, then hang it on shop’s door?? You walk in the streets and observe artisans engaged in their handicrafts work where smoke of their cigarettes gathers in the air, or breaks an ancient song from one of these shops... or one of them takes a box and sits on it, to take his breakfast on.

- Have these artisans been last night in a bar?

- Have they been to a Labourer’s Night?

- Have they drunken a lot, sang, wept and then returned late to their houses, leaning over the other’s shoulder, and when they entered their houses heard doors knocking they awakened from wine or suddenly felt wife’s voice:

“In the end you came?”

Why didn't you sleep in bar?
How much wine you can bear...
Since forty years we haven't slept together
In as much you slept with wine bottle, go
Spend night outdoors. Do something
Outdoors. Make out of clay
Another woman...make a bed and utensils

Make a life

- Oh you friend...
- The hard life of those ones, is full of art – a beautiful life. A poet feels handicapped to compose all this beautiful life in a poem. Sometimes language betrays him, whereas neither clay nor colour betrays you. And when poet tells you that he is going to come out of his veil to become a sculptor he is not mad in any way, but his scope of vision has become wider. It is because his language of that particular time was supposed to be clay.
- In your works I see no disability of the artist, and no desire of him to break from his dress or veil. You work in silence and faith. You dislike to “count donkey’s hairs” as you very often say this; what is simple for you is complicated for others those whom you described earlier in “Gauguin’s” words (swimming, floating on dark dawn)
- In your works you have broken the traditional visual line, and caused visitors to the Exhibition to change their views, you told him: Do not look in a stupid way to paintings hanged on walls...you said to him: Look on the ground.
- You do not put any costs to the Exhibition’s owner as you exhibit your works on floor that is all these fine concentrated and repeated objects you worked on for six months for example...you throw them carelessly! on the Exhibition’s floor; And you leave it in the evening when going to an important evening in a bar, filled with your work of art after you have created it alone in your own corner.
- I remember from childhood that grandmother used to apply pome granate fruit peels in order to tan skins, and I remember that a drop of her solution tainted my dress and all soap in our house couldn't help in removing it. This drop remained as a mark.
- You were a drop of that solution uneasily washed, but it is not bad to have mark poured in a dry or semi-dry field.
- Captured by your art world, I put ropes on my neck or take a seat like a horse saddle from some of your works wrapped with cloth or count those sticks confined to the corner, play with it to my pleasure hold it from all sides, not to know, knowledge is inside encyclopedias but for the sake of saturating myself with art' in order to live it...to have my finger filled...with music rings...

- That mark I left on floor, it was a pome granate fruit' drop difficult to remove from my clothes.

[3]

- The child is viewing the picture of a big apple, while a beam of light drops on the picture from top, child gazes and a certain woman is busy doing something, she was also looking with a woman's admiration to light pouring from the ceiling.

- The child extends its hand to the picture, holds the apple, takes it from the painting and bites the reddest part of it then bites another part, and another till he was left with the end dry stick to hold small black fruits.

- The woman is undressing herself and washes herself under beam light, then she dries up her hair at the window's air, and then she sits on a skin canapé, and she got quiet.

I came to know at a later time and after I have seen many works of fine art that the apple on the painting is not an apple, it is a picture of an apple, and the child was cheated, in fact he ate nothing at all, and all what he was doing was to look deceived to the image of an apple.

- The woman is more grown than child, she has not been as much interested in the painting as she is interested with that fire that pushes her to look for water to bathe and she saw in the beam of light pouring from roof something like a water source.

- The woman is more conscious than child, and she is not likely to be deceived by the apple seated on the painting, she knows with a woman's instinct that the image or picture could not extinguish blue fire inside a body so she extended her hand to water source, and water here is another deception or trick...a big trick to match with woman's big mind.

- In this novel, remains one short scene:

- After child ate the apple, he moved to another thing he was admiring water pouring on lady's body, he was seeing white foams lines making of her back a soft canal not to last very long...and a certain lovely perfume scent disseminates in the whole scene.

- After a few years, the woman is going to die...and the child will feel orphen...she has been his mother.

- And he will eat more fruits.

- And the lovely scent will be there all his life to come.

- What could child do so as to get rid of apple and soap smell?

- What can he do?

- What can he do in order to save himself from on-going chewing and he doesn't like to be a sheep?
- And finally he found a solution.
- He decided to take back all apples he ate to the many paintings he found in museums or with carpenters or in the markets, and he decided to redeem soap foam to all suspended chandeliers on the ceilings...
- It is no doubt a difficult task, but the child is well determined to do it, and it revealed to be (a work of) art...
- Perhaps this is the way art debutes.

[4]

- We sit on two neighbouring seats, that allow me to see part of your face, and you in turn could see a section of my face. The same face you described as “stone face”, that description satisfied my arrogance, as a gypsies, one could see in the shades of his erected body whole continents walking showing no resistance and silent.
- I was thinking of the nature of a debate between two persons sitting on two adjacent seats or facing each other while seated.
- In the two neighbouring seats it is allowed for any two who converse to see half face of each other approximately, the language is going to be very barren or naked to a half. And the world is half-naked.
- As for the case of two persons to converse while sitting our two opposite seats they were – directly – face-to-face. All features, all language and the whole world...in a confronting position...that resembles to a duel.
- As for “ Piet Mondrian, an artist of abstract style, we have talked about proximity and contrast.

You have come to a conclusion that and me as well that most artists have not liberated themselves from steps of Mondrian: the vertical line and horizontal line, he works on reduction and removing all that is extra in a painting or work of art, across colourful areas presented as extremely large or extremely tight.

- In talking about this artist there is some sort of a “geometry”, even that entertains an ambiguous relationship with the situation of two men talking on any thing as they were seated on two neighbouring seats or opposed ones.

- Talking about him might directly lead to talk about specific “techniques” in poetry; and if some artists have not yet freed themselves from the lines of this great artist: horizontal and vertical lines, hundreds of poets and up to now have stopped using the horizontal linear poem governed by rhyme and rhythm and at the same time they have not rid themselves from the vertical poem at the structural formal level.
- There were hundreds of poets who have shifted from one text “form” to “another”...but they remained eternally captives and slaves to the form, and mutes in a party without showing any knowledge of poetry, not touching poetry flame or fire, and not having yet washed themselves from the position river running from poetry source.
- In brief we shall come to a mutual agreement or understanding...
- It is the same for both poetry and drawing, and as there were strangers who enter into the painting world or jungle, there were also strangers who enter into the sleeping room of a poem, and play their noisy instruments at her while sleeping and enduring this sudden noise.

[5]

- I was sitting before two days in the splendid rectangle, filled with cigarette smoke, and harsh music (sometimes)...and if “Klaro” had not been there, I would have left it immediately, and the place would have not been a rectangle or lovely.
- We used to call it a grave and later on I came to recognize the connection between a rectangle and a graveyard. A rectangle takes you geometrically and emotionally to the image of a coffin.
- A graveyard is a large house, visited by coffins, for a quiet or comfortable stay and for ever, and in spite of this I refuse the idea of death, life prospects in front of me were large, and still I have cities and towns to visit, also some women I have not yet loved, and friends I have not slept in their small flat in my wanderings, also there are some poems I have not yet composed...
- Many waiting things in the wolf’s programme or agenda, and in life described as sweet by Nadhim Hikmat when he had been prisoner or in exile.
- So, this is the way I write you friend, and in my head a prior picture or image of a book I have borrowed from you entitled “Dear Theo” and I have not returned to you that book, and from your part you have not asked for it. It contains a number of exchanged letters between “Vincent Van Gogh” and his brother “Theo” and learned from the book how marvelous was “Theo” providing his brother “Gogh” with all he could do he was his support and shelter and in other words Theo used to believe highly in the genius of his brother “Van Gogh”, so, he was supposed to stay by the side of this genius man up to the end.

- I personally am not “Theo” but I do write to you with a concern of someone who writes to a person whom he sees always, as if he is “gazing at him but not seeing him”.

- Were you so distant to such an extent?

- I shall abandon the stream of ideas, a prerequisite of the language of poetry, and I shall abandon talk about the rectangle, Theo and you, and talk about a scene I have seen this afternoon.

“I saw a lady peeling an orange in the rectangle, she has been engaged in peeling, and beside her a music box, soon, she repeats from time to time same song obviously she loves very much, and she relaxes her body - as she peels – to a side of a brown table and drops at the same moment sun rays from an open curtain window, making her soft body sparkling a light sparkling under rays – as – in all that – her careless hair drops on the orange peels on music...and she peels and listens. So, lonely in the ninth floor, taking name of a rectangle, I was close to her, being able to view details of the scene”.

- At that particular moment I had a dream or wish adding it to the package of my own dreams: if I could know how to paint. I also wished to have artist’s fingers tainted with light and darkness, I would have created a painting and called it: “A Woman Peeling an Orange”.

- Why have I wished to learn painting in that particular moment? Why poetry has not come with all its thickness and sounds? Why haven’t I painted woman with my language? Does an artist stay incapable of depicting or describing a scene using his own instruments, and to resort to other artist instruments?

- This is quite possible in art; language (as symbols) is not all that matters. Even some observations were greater than language. Although colour is language or medium of expression and dance is language, but the woman has been peeling oranges, in the afternoon, listens to music, and light pours on her body from the window, she – certainly – needed a painter at that moment.

[6]

- You used to, and still you were, don’t like at all to read poetry in the presence of wine, you don’t like to an extent of getting angry sometimes, to a degree I feel a separation between you and poetry.

- Sometimes I come overwhelmed by the idea of writing a new text, and I used to read my new text, and I used to read my new texts to the first friend to encounter or meet, I used not to hide my verses. Verse is after all a different thing from treasures to be kept secret by its owners. I come to you with a text and a desire not to listen is revealed in you. I used to respect this, so I don’t read; and actually when I don’t read I do respect my poem in the first place.

- One poem I read to you – unexpectedly – but you surprise me with your much adoration for poetry in it...why so? I don't....and I don't know why until now I have not published this short poem and I have not arranged its draft keeping it as it is for over two years...
- The poem has to do with village folk who come to town and they signal to cars with their sticks to stop, they signal with their sticks as a sign of their pride as great villagers.
- I came to recognize that such a trend is “problematic”, listening to poetry is connected to respect of poetry even respect for all sorts of art.
- You don't like to see poetry read in such a manner, you wanted it hazardeous random. Surprising, strange and shy.
- You have a sacred feeling towards poetry within yourself, even I sometimes think you write poetry originally, well before going to painting, and all this leads to a big question, it is: “poetic taste” or poetry appreciation; the act of listening to a poem, and way of appreciating it is a form of bathing oneself into art, belonging to it, living within it, I used to get dazed when I sit among them an 'elite and educated people and they hurry to ask me read a poem where they discover that I am a poet; it is as if poetry is a magician or circus player and the other expect a dance or a magic game...
- You are different in the way you read a poem, it is simply because you were not one of these random people.
- In this way I compare through your severe way of accepting or appreciating a poetic text to your appreciation of a work of art or a painting, it s no doubt a sort of appreciation lacking no severity; in fact it is severity in as much as it is a fact, or let me call it: rootedness.
- I can say when feeling your listening or reading to a poem, and see your viewing a painting, I can say that art is a big world, and it is quite difficult to differentiate between a work of art in the area of writing and another in area of drawing or drama or music, this is because it is quite difficult to distinguish within one taste and it is quite impossible to have more than one taste or appreciation within a single person; the one who appreciates or loves a lovely poem must also love a lovely work or painting.

[7]

“A hoopoe has a wing longer than the other...
 And Picasso has seven spirits, as wanted Raphael Alberti
 Sea is calm below your seat
 As for silent cats under trees
 Suffer no hunger and no air.
 They were cats, no more.

And you were busy with luggage of colours and cloth.
To gypsies traveling.
What else?!
How could you fly in seven wings?
How could you fly?
You sick with art”

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