



Emerson College

Liason

Author(s): Mahmoud Darwish, N. Aruri and Carl Senna

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Mahmoud Darwish

Liason

Lovers passed us
like movie stars.
I am trembling but
the terror of
what
I want to do
is what
beckons me to
commit the crime.
And every poster
in town
reveals my craven
design.

I look for you. There
is only vertigo and
bile in my throat.
Fear: to crawl
like a baby
lost on the
sidewalk. Each
time
to meet
in a strange bar.

Dancing safecrackers
who have
tripped the
alarms,
we have robbed
justice for peace.

Half of my
body is a killer.
The victim is the

other half.

My enemies say:
Mahmoud was a
shy daytime pimp.
Sincere like the
screams
of the rat-bitten
girls of Tangiers.

A sultry marquee
intoxicates my
dreams.
For twenty years we
drift on asphalt
and dust.
Somewhere a file
card reports: The two
of them . . .
were the White and Blue
Niles . . .
one river flooding over
and the noonday Sahara.

When My Words Were

When we were friends
my words were
colocynth seeds.
Our lips were
smothered
with flies.

— *Translated by N. Aruri and Carl Senna*