

# UNDERSIEGE

M a h m o u d D a r w i s h

Excerpt

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Here on the slopes of hills, facing the dusk and the cannon of time  
Close to the gardens of broken shadows,  
We do what prisoners do,  
And what the jobless do:  
We cultivate hope.

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A country preparing for dawn. We grow less intelligent  
For we closely watch the hour of victory:  
No night in our night lit up by the shelling  
Our enemies are watchful and light the light for us  
In the darkness of cellars.

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Here there is no "I".  
Here Adam remembers the dust of his clay.

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On the verge of death, he says:  
I have no trace left to lose:  
Free I am so close to my liberty. My future lies in my own hand.  
Soon I shall penetrate my life,  
I shall be born free and parentless,  
And as my name I shall choose azure letters...

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You who stand in the doorway, come in,  
Drink Arabic coffee with us  
And you will sense that you are men like us  
You who stand in the doorways of houses  
Come out of our morningtimes,  
We shall feel reassured to be  
Men like you!