

# UNDERSIEGE

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

Excerpt

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We have brothers behind this expanse.  
Excellent brothers. They love us. They watch us and weep.  
Then, in secret, they tell each other:  
"Ah! if this siege had been declared..." They do not finish their sentence:  
"Don't abandon us, don't leave us."

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Our losses: between two and eight martyrs each day.  
And ten wounded.  
And twenty homes.  
And fifty olive trees...  
Added to this the structural flaw that  
Will arrive at the poem, the play, and the unfinished canvas.

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A woman told the cloud: cover my beloved  
For my clothing is drenched with his blood.

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If you are not rain, my love  
Be tree  
Sated with fertility, be tree  
If you are not tree, my love  
Be stone  
Saturated with humidity, be stone  
If you are not stone, my love  
Be moon  
In the dream of the beloved woman, be moon  
[So spoke a woman  
to her son at his funeral]