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European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

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## Death of the Lake



I once swam in Lake Urmia  
Along with my fourteen-year-old sister  
And realized that the lake was alive  
And had memory.  
We swam slowly  
Our heads out of the water  
Lest the salt got into our eyes, noses and mouths.  
We swam so far in the water  
That the shore behind us was no longer visible  
And we could see the silhouette of an island.  
There was no shark to fill our hearts with fear  
Nor any algae to grab our feet.  
The lake was all ours  
With a cloudless sky

And shadows of migrating cranes.  
There was no wind to make waves  
Nor any boat to disturb our peace.  
Our fear was from ourselves  
Of the panic of the water overcoming us  
Or the temptation of returning to shore  
Would capture our souls.  
There we stopped moving  
And let the water  
Tell us of its memories.

There, one could become the lute-player Safi al-Din Urmavi  
And listen to the beats of the heart of the lake  
Or like Rumi's scribe Hesam al-Din Chalabi  
Walk on the cool skin of the water  
Tipsy from the seven-thousand-year-old wine of Haji Firooz Village.

There, one could become Hulagu the grandson of Genghis  
Take out a sword and conquer Baghdad  
And dismantled the canopy of Caliphate forever.  
Then get buried in Shahi Island in Lake Urmia  
Without any offering of human sacrifice.

There, one could become Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria  
Conquer Media and Persia  
And call the coastal town "Urmia"  
Which means "the city of water".

There, one could become the high mobed of Azarbaijan  
Descend the fire temple of Azargoshasp and Shiz Volcano,  
Turn around seven hills of ashes,  
Wash off the road dust from one's body in the lake  
And call the lake "Chi Chast"  
Which means "shiny".

There, one could become a martyr of Miandoab City  
Ruholah or Hamid or Faramarz

Swim with one breath from Zarineh or Simineh River  
Until one reaches Lake Urmia.  
One could become Javanshir's mother or Jahangir's sister  
Rub black mud all over one's body  
And lay down in the sun  
Until joint pains relax  
And skin rashes subside.

There, one could become Turk, Kurd, Persian  
Assyrian, Armenian or Jew,  
And from Lake Urmia  
Join all other lakes of Iran:  
Bakhtegan, Hamoon, Parishan, Almagol,  
Shorabil, Zarivar, Maharlu, Ovan, Gahar, Aras, Namak,  
And even Khor Musa Estuary and Gavkhouni Marsh.

But today  
The lake is going dry  
And its color is becoming  
Bloodier every day.  
Am I able to swim with my sister again  
In Lake Urmia  
This time along with her daughter?  
Or should I walk on its salt bed alone  
And listen to the sound of my footsteps?  
Can our tears  
Fill the lake again  
And our blood on the street  
Dilute its bloody color?  
Ohhh!  
The lake is dying  
With all of its memories  
And a salt storn is on its way.

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