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Forbidden



A poem by Ahmad Fouad Najem
Presented and translated and by Adib S. Kawar

Ahmad Fouad Najem

The revolutionary hero poet.

The beloved poet.

The French poet Louis Aragon said about him: He has the power to destroy the walls of fortresses.

Dr. Ali Al-Raei called him: The poet the rifle.

Former Egyptian president Anwar As-Sadat called him: The obscene poet.

He was nicknamed “the last pauper poet”.

The muffler of general security.

Born in Eastern Egypt 1929

His father was a police officer... He was afraid that his son would be chased by every policeman in Egypt.

He was jailed eighteen times because of his poetry.

Najem said: "I was jailed in Abu Zoubol prison" (one of the worst in Egypt) as he was accused of instigating the January 18/19 1977 uprising.

He commented: 'Just imagine sir, that in the January 18/19, 1977 uprising in which about twenty million Egyptians participated from Alexandria down to Aswan, I was the main instigator!!!'

"In God's name, is there a greater glory than this, which is an honor that I don't claim? It is an accusation that I don't deny and an honor that I claim. Can I possibly instigate one million people?"

"The moment I was released from jail in 1978 and while I didn't have the time take a breath of fresh air, the boys of the school of engineering of Ain Shams University came to me and told me that they wanted me to speak at the commencement, I said 'goooooood' along with Sheikh Imam, that is Sheikh Imam to go to Hosh Adam (Hosh means ruins, which is one of the poorest neighborhoods of Cairo in which Adam and Najem used to live). The poor soul went to jail, and they sent us to Torrah with five engineering school students, and it was God's will that the day we were arrested coincided with the 'auspicious' day of President Sadat's visit to the holy city of Jerusalem!!! Just imagine God's wisdom!!!"

"It happened that 'his Excellency' the general governor of the Torrah prison area was a big thief, and he had managed to eat the uncooked and the stale, and he did not want the state security to know of what he was doing; so he volunteered to make life miserable for us... I told him, 'That is enough', but he did not want to understand... 'Treat us as reserve prisoners as per prison law' ... but he was adamant to treat us as such so as to please his masters and mete out bad treatment... But we did not let him do as he pleased. We wrote a number of statements and smuggled them out, and started a hunger strike that lasted for 12 days... The news reached the international and local press, which was a killing

blow to thief general, because they accused him of negligence and he was transferred from Torrah where he filled his belly...”

Forbidden

Forbidden to travel
Forbidden to sing
Forbidden to speak
Forbidden from longing
Forbidden from resentment
Forbidden from smiling
And everyday of your love, prohibitions increase

And everyday I love you
more than the previous one
My love the craving and jailed ship
An informer at every knot
Soldiers at each port
Forbids me to yearn for you
or fly to you
And to take refuge in your lap
or at your welcoming bosom
As a suckling baby suffering from weaning
And return to your compassionate heart
My love the adorned city
Sad... grief in every neighborhood
In every palace decoration
Forbidden to wake up adoring you
Or go to bed and whisper with you
Forbidden from from shutting up
And every day of your love, prohibitions increase

Original : <http://www.tlaxcala.es/pp.asp?reference=2471&lg=ar>

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