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(Translated by Rebecca Ruth Gould and
Kayvan Tahmasebian)

Contributors’ Notes

On the Cover
Barry Falls is an illustrator living in Belfast, Northern Ireland. His work is an exploration of
hand-drawn marks, textures, and images.
Five Scenes from Icarus

I Justice
Each word
is sacrificed to a sword
that beams forth its light.
It rains.
Each word wears a white mask
and a self to be
submitted to the rain.
Each word is an angel
trembling from nakedness.

I have lifted the sword.
I rip the mask
off the word
and place it on my face.
I submit myself
to the rain
and before the scent of life ascends,
I take flight
with the angel’s two wings.

The rain has stopped.
The sun of language
draws near!

II Misty Dreams
The sky wanted
a misty sip from me
when the hood of the stroller filled with dew.
In the stroller, sleep seized you!

Poetry
Through the vineyard, through the mist,
slumber and wine were distributed.
Cheers
in the mist!

Icarus
fell.

III Icaruses
The word with its movement — the word in flight —
has filled the space with the scent of flesh.
What is a poem but the movement of a word?

In the room the women
are talking of Icarus
while Icarus’s poem
is not composed.

Just one word:
the sun!

And if you return someday
from that burning pilgrimage,
I will fill the torches cup by cup with the sea
and you will know that its flame
is the bluest and coldest of flames.

IV In Reverse

to Mohsen Saba

1
The one who left will never return
will collapse.
At the cloud the narcissus stares at the cloud.
It rains. It does not rain.
Beneath the wet cloak,
when will I be moved to bring the firewood?

2
Oh, my friend! My friend!
Twice is enough.
The third is spring air.
When Icarus falls
from the green sky
the narcissus’s corolla fills with rainwater.
Look inside! A small Icarus
ascends.

V From Icarus and the Bondsman of the Deer

Just as the thunderstorm in the rainbow
mixes colors with colors,
I wish that poetry could mix the two legends together
so that we could stare at each other in the poison sunrise,
and the plants would recognize water in the poison sunrise.
(Water is our majestic selflessness and has taught them
the secret of life and us the secret of death.)
And the sun would fit into the grape.
(The grape is the Holy Last Supper.)
Now that the flood of sun has taken the wing away,
the deer is helpless.
He falls.
Generous deer bestow nothing.
They watch and watch and watch.
Now that the sun slowly
moves west
on the hill, two fires have turned red.
The horizon is recognized in your compromise.
This horizon of bliss: the bondsman of water
concealed in wet firewood.

Note

"Deer Bondsman" is a title for the eighth Shia Imam, Reza (whose name, meaning "bliss," is referenced in the second to last line of this poem). According to legend, Imam Reza protected a deer from being killed by a hunter. He died after being poisoned by grapes. The two legends to which the poet refers are those of Imam Reza and Icarus.