to a still moment repeated

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I.

You saw a blue helmet on the Naqoura highway. Cloudless summer, lush vegetation dusty from pollution. The helmet, the same blue as the sky, was like a wart on an azure cheek, as though the sky was in relief.

If the sky had been a mountain, we would have used our legs and scrambled up, engraved its name on its flank, dug our graves in the sky. Entombed like this, enskyed, we wouldn't have been able to go any higher.

When you spied the Blue Helmet of UNIFIL—a division of the United Nations mandated to protect Lebanon from the Israeli invader with a budget of five hundred and ten million dollars and ten thousand international soldiers—you still believed in people of principle, like believing in the king.

The Blue Helmet was a Catalan sent as a peacekeeper to South Lebanon. He met the requirements: beefy, alert, tender. He'd been recruited for his empathy: it could make all the difference when feeling the impulse to put the finger on the trigger.

His job was to protect so-called mixed people, not to be confused with unique people—in whom it would be possible to dissociate the criminal from their origins, to uncouple their femicide from a cruelty called terrorism and associated only with the population of the Orient as a whole, based on the principle that the root of this terrorism was the Arab mother and that, even if premature, her baby would be bestial.

The Blue Helmet's job is to disregard this law and see the local population as civilians going about their routines: heading to the souk, ordering a fresh hen, picking up ground spices, pausing for a coffee at ten after eleven in the morning, the hour when the wind perfects the waves, when Julia Boutros's voice crackles on the small radio set on the concrete cube, when salt escapes the air and takes refuge in life's veins, sticks in the gouges of plastic chairs, encrusts and forms miniature salterns in the streaked cracks of the small oozing radio, aging its sound by a hundred years.

Phosphorus parodies voluminous clouds, covertly, the way stonefish simulate stone, the way insects impersonate sticks, attack apes defence, condemning each eye to counterfeit the other, a mythology of perpetual disfigurement, the sign mimics the curve, camouflages the root distorted by the graft, the border is a scar attesting to its impasse.

In the sky helmet, we would have built our homes, when blue is said to appease, there would have been peace, if the sky was a mountain, we would have adjourned our disputes about the continents' finitude, geological rafts impossible to row, to reconcile, yet here we are, in this lost background, these bottomless depths, this blue overflow flooding seas and oceans, waiting for a form to split off from the sky and respond.

II.

To beef up summer, soldiers dismantle chairs, make them into rafts. Giant budgets name the streaked form of the Orient. Alert to the waves, a radio transmits the foam. Salt crackles, escapes the wind, picks up the invader's shadow in mid-air. Through mimicry, clouds immobilize cruelty. Cement splits the ifs off conditions. Silos store a collective time. Between jumping and falling, there is a tender latency.

A premature baby on a concrete cube takes root in the unworthy. The blue highway wonders whether there will be a pause. A helmet enfeebles the sky, waits just like adjourned people. Such people post circles without beginnings.

The sky clutches the hours in bouquets of twelve.
Time is a dome for perfecting bottomless depths.
A finger appeases the weight of the globe.

In the division of blue spots
the sky spies the jobs denied to the seas:

- duration
- flight
- gravity

III.

Pushed into the world
on this overflow of principles.

Clouds immobilize a pause.

Eleven babies of salt conjure
eleven babies of silos:
jumping means falling into the sky

In the dome, the hen sees the routine of the International
Blue that dissociates time into flags

Soldiers dismantle mixtures,
separate plants from feet

On a cube, water is uncoupled from its beginning

The Israeli encrusts miniature sounds
in a plastic everyday existence

The sky oozes, searches the waves
they drank coffee, spices
at empathetic volumes

Cracks of tender winds name femicide
a blue chair-form at the bottom of the sea

Jumping means arranging a bouquet of legs

In falling, each branch names each wave
The globe waits for them with giant cheeks

Time rafts repaint the blue openwork

Does the sky have a bottom?
Fish in the form of time?
Deep down, the hours wonder whether
you spy their hush

— Hoda Adra
Translation: Oana Avasilichioaei

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