

From Traverser



Habib Tengour

translated from French by Pierre Joris

Dubious dawn
and sunrise sweats
with what hairy strength tone up one's soul
how to speak of love
logically to love with unabating
passion when there is no opportunity
another question awaits the young man
at the bus stop an enigma
after she had thrown herself from the top of the rock
space shrinks
the stars pass by before midnight
the sea riles the gaze
what blue
isn't it dictatorship
one repeats the question: isn't it **dictatorship**
you think twice
and don't answer
the perimeter knows
from experience the facets are multiple

and variable according to the fashions
 the coral snake and the leech larvae and the corrupted
 seeds and the obtuse silence and ass licking and enflamed
 preaching and the bastard crew and the most knowledgeable
 shepherds and the post-battle heroes and the fucking guides
 and their charisma created artificially by computer and the
 paradisiacal whore to be consumed after work and the
 premature ejaculations and the framework of the speech
 and that it secretly frames and the snitching diviners and
 the brain-dead henchmen in the dark corners of the
 projects and the corrupt rectors who brandish the Book
 and the impotent ministers who ramble on and worship
 put up to auction and the easy prey when the flag flies
 in the wind and the metamorphoses of the face and the
 mouse that sodomizes the cat and the lion that loses his
 mane and the anathema and the list that circulates and the
 new members of the moorish baths and the closed door
 work sessions and the friday games and transparency at
 the polls and fake diplomas and under-the-counter bribes
 and the congressmen pimps and the single one at the top
 who mistrusts even when applauded his followers and the
 popular base in agreement and the leader's haughtiness and
 the revolutionary jolts and the late reforms and the empty
 basket and the traitors and the turncoats and the paternal
 reprimands and the wolf's tail and the long queues and the
 prayer beads and heaven that doesn't wait and the B52's and
 the panoply of missiles and the artisanal bomb in the garden
 and the bars of the internment camps and intelligence and the
 hood and the use of forgeries and the hands in the shadows
 and primarily the military all branches thereof parading by.
 ... and yet the perimeter isn't vast
 it's bathing in a luminosity that widens it
 and the sea
 green in its bays tears in its middle

Inflation...

health one has to watch one's health

the children are grown already

and others grow up too many

nervous

champing at the bit in the streets where there's no room left

there are those who return from Afghanistan

those who dream of a boat to Australia

and Baghdad under the bombs

the sea veils itself black

Poverty lies in wait on its pear tree

the satellite dishes are hollow

O the beautiful promises of yesteryear

your plans are totally wrong

You mustn't believe...

my tribe which nothing sways doesn't stop

despite the successive droughts and a hurricane of fire

to brag about the deviousness of lovers

to prolixly describe the border Customs it goes through...

The sea it

inhabits a shell

remains a wild

beast in the story