**Identity Card**

Mahmoud Darwish, 1964

Put it on record.

........I am an Arab

And the number of my card is fifty thousand  
I have eight children  
And the ninth is due after summer.  
........What's there to be angry about?

Put it on record  
.........I am an Arab   
  
Working with comrades of toil in a quarry.  
I have eight children  
For them I wrest the loaf of bread,  
The clothes and exercise books  
From the rocks  
And beg for no alms at your door,

Lower not myself at your doorstep.  
.........What's there to be angry about?

Put it on record.  
.........I am an Arab.  
    
I am a name without a title,  
Patient in a country where everything  
Lives in a whirlpool of anger.

.........My roots  
.........Took hold before the birth of time  
 ........Before the burgeoning of the ages,  
.........Before cypress and olive trees,.........  
.........Before the proliferation of weeds.

My father is from the family of the plough  
.........Not from highborn nobles.

And my grandfather was a peasant  
.........Without line or genealogy.

My house is a watchman's hut  
.........Made of sticks and reeds.

Does my status satisfy you?  
.........I am a name without a surname.

Put it on record.  
.........I am an Arab.

Color of hair: jet black.  
Color of eyes: brown.  
My distinguishing features:  
.........On my head the *'iqal* cords over a *keffiyeh*  
........Scratching him who touches it.

My address:  
.........I'm from a village, remote, forgotten,  
.........Its streets without name  
.........And all its men in the fields and quarry.

.........What's there to be angry about?

Put it on record.  
.........I am an Arab.

You stole my forefathers' vineyards  
.........And land I used to till,  
.........I and all my children,  
.........And you left us and all my grandchildren  
.........Nothing but these rocks.  
.........Will your government be taking them too  
.........As is being said?

So!  
.........Put it on record at the top of page one:  
.........I don't hate people,  
.........I trespass on no one's property.

And yet, if I were to become hungry  
.........I shall eat the flesh of my usurper.  
.........Beware, beware of my hunger  
.........And of my anger!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ONLY  BREATH**  **--RUMI** | |
|  | |
| **Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu,** |
| **Buddhist, sufi, or zen. Not any religion** |
|  |
| **or cultural system. I am not from the East** |
| **or the West, not out of the ocean or up** |
|  |
| **from the ground, not natural or ethereal, not** |
| **composed of elements at all. I do not exist,** |
|  |
| **am not an entity in this world or the next,** |
| **did not descend from Adam or Eve or any** |
|  |
| **origin story. My place is placeless, a trace** |
| **of the traceless. Neither body or soul.** |
|  |
| **I belong to the beloved, have seen the two** |
| **worlds as one and that one call to and know,** |
|  |
| **first, last, outer, inner, only that** |
| **breath breathing human being.** |