

# **In Jerusalem**

by Mahmoud Darwish (translated by Fady Joudah)

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls,  
I walk from one epoch to another without a memory  
to guide me. The prophets over there are sharing  
the history of the holy ... ascending to heaven  
and returning less discouraged and melancholy, because love  
and peace are holy and are coming to town.

I was walking down a slope and thinking to myself: How  
do the narrators disagree over what light said about a stone?  
Is it from a dimly lit stone that wars flare up?

I walk in my sleep. I stare in my sleep. I see  
no one behind me. I see no one ahead of me.

All this light is for me. I walk. I become lighter. I fly  
then I become another. Transfigured. Words  
sprout like grass from Isaiah's messenger  
mouth: "If you don't believe you won't be safe."

I walk as if I were another. And my wound a white  
biblical rose. And my hands like two doves  
on the cross hovering and carrying the earth.

I don't walk, I fly, I become another,  
transfigured. No place and no time. So who am I?

I am no I in ascension's presence. But I  
think to myself: Alone, the prophet Muhammad  
spoke classical Arabic. "And then what?"

Then what? A woman soldier shouted:

Is that you again? Didn't I kill you?

I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die.