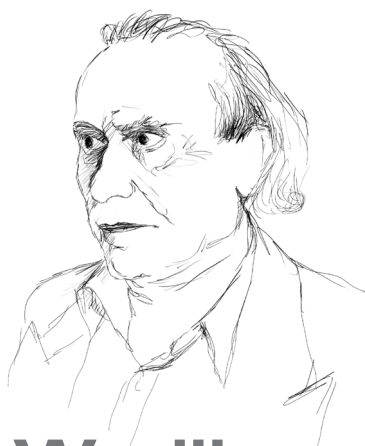


Wadih Saadeh

Dust





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2000

Translated by
Clarissa C. Burt

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Dusties

Deserted are the roadways, and we're blowing about alone.
The earth has come to dust; and here we are, completing the life of dust.

We complete the life of the dust of the earth. This, whose life someone must complete, and here we are doing it.

We are not completing the earth's life, but rather the life of its dust. We complete not a life, but a death. We came to accompany the dust on its last gust, bear it to its resting place, and sleep with it.

What the earth was does not resemble us. It is our antithesis, while we are its debris. We did not come to complete that earth, but to demolish it. We came not to complete but to demolish.

There is no religion before us, no religion after us, no religion for us. Dusties with no religion, not devout, for dust has nothing but to rise and float. Swimmers in a void. In space whose mother or child the earth is not. In the void of paternity, and the void of filiation. We are going unto our god, unto nonbeing.

We're dusties, and this is what we saw in our blowing about. This was nothing before it came to dust; it was nothing before we came to be dust:

The Beauty of the One Passing On

The ones passing on quickly are beautiful. They don't leave behind the weight of a shadow. Perhaps a little dust, which quickly disappears.

The most beautiful among us is the one relinquishing his presence, the one leaving behind a clean open space with the vacancy of his seat. Beauty in the air with the absence of his voice. Purity in the dirt with his uncultivated acreage. The most beautiful among us is the absent one -

The one cutting off space and time with an agility which does not let place captivate him nor time scatter him. Scattering himself in the swift gusts, not leaving straw for his threshing floor, nor wheat for a field other than his. The one pulling out of the prerequisite of walking to arrive. The one pulling out of arriving.

The one passing on quickly is like an emigrating angel. Leaving no residence which could be a place for a sin, committing no sin, committing no act of staying .

Quickly under a sun which touches him not, under rain which wets him not, atop dirt which leaves no trace on him, quickly with no trace and no heritage and no legacy.

He didn't stay enough to learn a language. He didn't stay to absorb customs. He has no language and no customs, no masters and no apprentices.

One passing on is beyond language, beyond customs, beyond ranks, names and emulation.

With no name, beyond public summons and convocation above gestures, except the gesture of passing on.

With no sound because sound is a heaviness in the air.

Because the sound may bump into another

It may crush another sound in space; it may disturb breezes

And with no desire, because desire is an abiding, a persevering.

Those passing on quickly are beautiful; they don't abide in a place so as to leave repulsiveness in it. They don't stay time enough to leave a spot on the memory of those abiding there.

Those who abided for long with us left spots on the fabric of our memory that we don't know how to wipe away.

Painful spots - wherever one was on the seats, we can no longer sit.

Those staying for long take away our seats, turning the furniture of our homes into pieces of themselves. So that when we sit, we sit on their ribs, on their bones.

Those staying crush abiders. As for those passing on, they don't crush anyone, and no one crushes them. They do not

tread on beings, nor do they tread heavily on the earth. Even the air doesn't espy them but a moment.

With no anxiety, with no regret, no gods and no adherents. They have one faith: Passing on.

The ones abandoning places, and native lands and parents and sons. The ones breaking the bond. The ones ruining gallows made of the iron of place, time, and belonging.

Those who hold fast to staying fall gradually, one after the other. They gradually fall down on their native lands which have become delusion. On their sense of belonging, which has become a lie. On their parental feeling which has become a burden, on their faiths which kill us and kill them and kill life.

The ones passing on have no victims. Is it thus in order to glorify life, that we glorify its passage in haste, that we glorify suicide?

With the buoyancy of bird's beating their wings, and the breeze opening up for them. With the buoyancy of the open air of passing on, and the scarring over of the air of release.

Ones passing on quickly, like the moment of snapping apart.

They have a sound from the sparrow, a glance from the branch, a quickly snatched whiff from the flower.

Their sparrows are for song and migration, not for imprisonment in cages, nor for being preserved forever stuffed in storefront windows. Their sparrows are the traveling spirit, not staying feathers.

And their flowers are the redolence escaping outside the vase.

Who would have discovered the beauty of passing on, besides migrants, those who don't care, those dilly-dallying, the deranged, and the dead?

What moment uncovers life more than the moment of absenting oneself from it?

Is it because of that, must be a friendship with the departure more than a friendship with the habitat?

And, is it because of that, our life should be, only, an exercise upon the beauty of the departure?

The most beautiful of us are the ones departing. The most beautiful of us are the suicides. Who wanted nothing and whom nothing took in completely. Those who took one step in the river, enough to discover the waters.

The most beautiful of us are those who are not among us. Who left us lightly, humbly leaving their seats for people who may be coming now to this party.

A stupid party; and despite that, the ones clinging to staying
leave no seat!

But what are the seats for, so long as the partiers start as
guests and end as enemies?

So we can pass on lightly, then before the daggers devour us,
before we become the main dish of the feast.

The moment of arrival at the celebration is the whole beauty
of the celebration. After that, the beauty quickly becomes
departure. The departing step is always the most beautiful.

The departing mingle with the fresh breeze. And when we
stop to pay our last respects, we must also pay last respects to
their memory along with them too. Because memory hampers
their departure, it brings them back to their place, it makes
them solid.

Memory hampers those who wish for death. It makes those
desirous of life dead.

So let's bury it, then.

Let's bury memory as we sing

It's a stupid party in any case, but in view of the fact that
we've arrived, let's sing and dance.

For a few seconds, in which we may be beautiful

But the most beautiful of us will remain: the absent one.

Exile of Language

If language is truly our home, we are living in exile.

Isn't it what we speak with ourselves, not with others?

And there is no communion – not with our inner self nor with the other.

Language is a private matter, not a public matter. We speak in order to be convinced, and we are not convinced. So others be convinced by us, and they are not convinced.

Language is being afar, not becoming close.

Speakers exile themselves

Emerging from exile is emerging from language.

Language is the sounds of dead people.

Thus we pave the ground with corpses

Living speech was the speech of the first human. At first, before he spoke.

Shade that We Be

They're shadows, they're shadows. Don't despair. Strike the tree and shadows fall. Cut the branches, you'll see the sun.

But must one cut the tree off at its roots? Or does remembrance of light suffice?

Remembrance is almost our whole existence. Although we cut the branches and remain shadows.

And in this race, who reaches sunset first? The person or his shadow?

We race each other, we and our remembrance, then we crash into each other and disappear.

We become dead dust, and we settle down after that on the mire of the living.

Mire we didn't will or make; not to be in it, nor to leave it to someone else, nor to see it.

They are shadows, shades.

Cut down the tree.

Desire

The one who has dropped desires has reached the goal. For there's no desire to go further, nor to arrive.

Isn't arriving relinquishing the desire to arrive? So you come to be with no desire for anything, just the small seat on which you sit, perhaps, or the tree before you, or the void with no seat and no tree?

Isn't arriving to stay where you are? For your goal to be your exact place where you now are? To overcome desire - isn't this the great passage?

Desires spoil outings. Those having desires no longer see the beauties of the road. Their eyes come to be elsewhere, in the locus of desire, which does not settle in a locus. Unlocatable desire. They come to be in the Absent, the stolen, the non-existent. They come to be in No-place.

The desirous abide in the annulled.

Is it possible to build a house on Absence? To put a chair in Nihilicity?

Desires make a hole in the spirit, they make wounds. May one put a seat in a wound?

If they are the wounds which desires dug across the extent of history, now flowing with blood from us, they have not yet reached their equilibrium, nor their goal. Is it then a

desideratum, to make a new flow from our wounds, or to cicatrize the wounds?

Must one squash the body and soul in the passageways leading towards impossible desires, or sit and enjoy the scenery of the road?

Must one seek an absent one? Or be glad at his non-presence?

If he will not come, and we won't reach him, do we live the absence of awaiting him, or do we live our presence in his absence?

There is a dance on the byway which racers do not see, a dance that the sedentary know. There is a dance hidden in sedentariness.

The still, alone, hear the songs. The noisy are the deaf of their own noisiness.

In stillness is a beautiful song. In silence is an astonishment of sounds. When you sit and are silent, you are inventing new chords.

And births that don't screech when they are born.

And deaths that are not sorry, when they die.

And dances that are intoxicated by their stillness.

And distances that cross the byways while in their seats.

And flowerpots that waft scent from their emptiness.

In stillness there is a new earth. And heavens break dawn
from closed eyes.

Occasionally the wound spreads its summer over the houses,
and drops of blood come forth with their chairs to seek the
shade of trees.

Occasionally drops go forth for outings and do not return
to their veins. Occasionally the blood dries on the door,
occasionally it is lost, and always it comes down on what is
not its place, on dirt, on stone, on skin, on fabric, and never
at its goal. For blood's goal, most likely, is not to go out, but
to stay in its place.

Emerging from place isn't an outing; it isn't attainment; it is
loss.

Desires which take us out of our houses grant us neither
shade nor an outing. Desires drive us to flight on the byways,
and they leave bones of ours in unknown places.

Am I saying 'Don't desire'? How can that be? Isn't that like
saying 'Don't be'?

But is a universe by way of desire? Or is the universe born
furtively in desire's absence?

Does the universe abide in desire or does it begin from the point after it, from the empty space, and extend into a huge void?

To truly be - is it to work to fill oneself with being, or to empty it out of you?

And the goal – do you attain it if you work for it or if you annul it?

Haven't you arrived when you annul goals?

If you reach a desire, it gives birth desires. For desire attained becomes manifold. It bears quarrelsome children, so you run, run and you don't attain them until you breathe your last.

Sit down

Don't gasp for breath on the byways,

Annul the way - you'll arrive.

Knowing

Are we to feel assured when we know, or are we more anxious?

Is there hope in knowing, or despair?

Is it the way of salvation or the way of perdition?

But first, do we possess certainty or doubt? Fact or supposition? And whether it is thus or so, does it lead to salvation?

Indeed, what salvation?

Every time we increase in knowledge, we increase in doubt, for every bit of knowing is doubt.

And whoever knows more is more anxious, more despairing; he perishes more.

Every new bit of knowing is a new doubt, and a new despair. It's even as if optimism is nothing but ignorance. It's even as if ignorance is salvation!

Knowing isn't the light [at the end] of the tunnel. No sooner do rays uncover one area of dark, but other dark areas, unknowns, appear. Those who enter the tunnel of their knowledge have nothing in front of them but darkness, with death in some area of dark.

The ignorant one does not enter tunnels nor does he need

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