MAHMOUD DARWISH*

Mahmoud Darwish (Al-Birveh, Houston; 1941–2008) is a Palestinian poet of great renown. The poet, who was exposed to Arabic language and culture growing up, uses poetry to portray the Palestinian resistance movements. In 1948, when he was a child, the village where he was born was occupied and destroyed by Israeli forces. Darwish, who had to migrate to Lebanon with his family, returned a year later. But destroy the village. Despite great pain and deprivation, he begins to produce works that will make him one of the most well-known poets in the world. Dervish, who was exiled from Israel in 1970, had to travel around many Arab countries. He wrote the Beirut Ode after the massacre in Sabra and Shatilla in September 1982. He won the Lenin Prize in the Soviet Union in 1984 with this poem. The poet, who was arrested and imprisoned many times for his poems and articles, wrote many works expressing the human drama and love of the homeland. Many of his poems were made into songs by famous composers. The poet is also the songwriter of the Palestinian national anthem, Nasheed al-Intifada. Darwish, who won the International Nazım Hikmet Award in 2002, also has many international awards. To perpetuate the memory of the famous poet, there is the Mahmoud Darwish Museum, which operates as a cultural complex in the Al-Masyun area of Ramallah city.

Darwish, M. (1980). Identity Card (translated by Denys Johnson Davies). *The Music of Human Flesh:* 10-12.

Identity Card

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.
Colour of hair: jet black.
Colour 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!