

NAZIM HİKMET*



**Nâzım Hikmet (1902 Thessaloniki, 1963 Moscow) is one of the world's most recognized poets. His poems have been translated into more than fifty languages, and his works have received many awards. He is the most important pioneer of modern Turkish poetry. During the War of Independence phase of the Turkish Revolution (1921), he traveled to Ankara with his friend Vâlâ Nureddin and met the leader of the revolution, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Later, the young poet went to Moscow, where he studied at the Eastern Workers Communist University. When he returned to Türkiye, he published 835 lines, a groundbreaking book in Turkish poetry. The book had great resonance. A member of the Communist Party of Türkiye, the poet was put on trial several times. He was sentenced to 28 years and 4 months in prison. He was kept in prison for 13 years. He wrote many of his works in prison. He was released under the amnesty law. Nazım Hikmet's masterpieces include the Epic of Kuvayi Milliye, Memleketimden İnsan Manzaraları, Şeyh Bedreddin Destanı, Jakond ile Si-Ya-U, and Letters to Taranta Babu. The poet died in Moscow, and his grave is in Novodevichy Cemetery.*

Hikmet, N. (2013). To Asian-African Writers (Translated by Furkan Çirkin). Bütün Eserleri Son Şiirleri, (p. 1795). İstanbul: YKY.

To Asian-African Writers

My sisters and brothers;
never mind my blonde hair,
I'm Asian.
never mind my blue eyes,
I'm African.
the trees in my place don't make a shadow on themselves,
 just like in your places.
in my place, the bread is in the lion's mouth,
money doesn't grow on trees there,
 and my people pass away before age fifty
 just like in your places.
never mind my blonde hair,
I'm Asian.
never mind my blue eyes,
I'm African.
the eighty percent of my people are illiterate,
our poems spread by word-of-mouth and they turn into a folk song.
in my place, poems can be a symbol like a flag,
 just like in your places.
my sisters and brothers;
our poems should be able to plow the field
with a weak ox,
they should be able to get into the swamp in the rice fields
 up to knees,
they should be able to ask all the questions,
should be able to collect all the lights,
should be able to stand at the roadsides
 just like milestones.
they should be able to notice the approaching enemy before everyone.
they should be able to beat the tom-toms in the jungle
and until there are no more slaves, occupied lands left on the earth,
until there are no more atomic clouds left in the sky.
our poems should be able to give their property, minds, ideas, lives,
and everything they have
 to great freedom.

(22 January 1962, Moscow)