

IN RESEPECTFUL MEMORY OF MAHMOUD DARWISH



Born [13 March 1941](#)
[Al-Birwa](#)

Died [August 9, 2008](#) (aged 67)
[Houston, Texas, United States](#)

Occupation [Poet, writer](#)

Mahmud Darwish was one of the greatest Palesinian and Arab poets, the vibrant voice of the pain of exile, of losing one's land and identity, the poet of the Resistance. He was an ally of Ethiopians and Africans as a whole struggling for dignity, equality and their inalienable rights. Back in 1991, Hama Tuma wrote to Darwish the poem we publish below(ref the collection: Of Spades and Ethiopians) and we have two poems from Darwish himself to remember the great poet who passed away today August 9.

TELL THEM (TO M.D.)

Tell them your number
if they want
It is what they have on their wrists
tattooed by the Hitlerites.
If they ask your address
tell them of your tent
in the wild desert.
Permanent home?
Tell them you are a Diaspora of a sort
they will understand.
If they ask your name
tell them it is not Ephraim
but they know it well.
They know you are Arab
but if they ask
don't hold back.
Nationality they won't ask
for they know where is your land.

**But tell them anyway
 day after day
tell them your nation
is PALESTINE.**

(H.Tuma ,1991)

**Identity Card
Mahmoud Darwish - 1964**

**Record!
I am an Arab
And my identity card is number fifty thousand
I have eight children
And the ninth is coming after a summer
Will you be angry?**

**Record!
I am an Arab
Employed with fellow workers at a quarry
I have eight children
I get them bread
Garments and books
from the rocks..
I do not supplicate charity at your doors
Nor do I belittle myself at the footsteps of your chamber
So will you be angry?**

**Record!
I am an Arab
I have a name without a title
Patient in a country
Where people are enraged
My roots
Were entrenched before the birth of time
And before the opening of the eras
Before the pines, and the olive trees
And before the grass grew**

**My father.. descends from the family of the plow
Not from a privileged class
And my grandfather..was a farmer
Neither well-bred, nor well-born!
Teaches me the pride of the sun
Before teaching me how to read
And my house is like a watchman's hut
Made of branches and cane
Are you satisfied with my status?
I have a name without a title!**

**Record!
I am an Arab
You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors
And the land which I cultivated
Along with my children
And you left nothing for us
Except for these rocks..
So will the State take them
As it has been said?!**

**Therefore!
Record on the top of the first page:
I do not hate people
Nor do I encroach
But if I become hungry
The usurper's flesh will be my food
Beware..
Beware..
Of my hunger
And my anger!**

Psalm Three by Mahmoud Darwish

**On the day when my words
were earth...
I was a friend to stalks of wheat.**

**On the day when my words
were wrath
I was a friend to chains.**

**On the day when my words
were stones
I was a friend to streams.**

**On the day when my words
were a rebellion
I was a friend to earthquakes.**

**On the day when my words
were bitter apples
I was a friend to the optimist.**

**But when my words became
honey...
flies covered
my lips!**

I Come From There by Mahmoud Darwish

**I come from there and I have memories
Born as mortals are, I have a mother
And a house with many windows,
I have brothers, friends,
And a prison cell with a cold window.
Mine is the wave, snatched by sea-gulls,
I have my own view,
And an extra blade of grass.
Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,
And the bounty of birds,
And the immortal olive tree.
I walked this land before the swords
Turned its living body into a laden table.
I come from there. I render the sky unto her mother
When the sky weeps for her mother.
And I weep to make myself known
To a returning cloud.
I learnt all the words worthy of the court of blood
So that I could break the rule.
I learnt all the words and broke them up
To make a single word: Homeland.....**