

## Mehdi Akhavan-Sales (1928-1990)

### Winter

Translated by: Mohammad Rajabpur

Thrusting their heads in their collars,  
They won't greet you back.  
No head is raised to greet and meet friends.  
As the road is dark and slippery,  
The eyes could hardly see.  
If you stretch your hands in affection towards someone,  
As it is freezing cold,  
He will unwillingly take out his hands from his warm pockets.  
Exhaled by the warmth of the bosom,  
The breath becomes a dark cloud  
And rises before your eyes as a wall.  
What do you expect your far or close friends to do,  
When your breath behaves as such?  
My fair Messiah!  
Ah, aged Christian in grubby garments!  
Oh ... it is bitterly cold!  
Best wishes and Good luck to you!  
Open the door and answer me!  
It's me, your night-guest, a dejected bohemian,  
It's me, an infirm kicked stone,  
It's me, the humble curse of creation, an inharmonious melody.  
Neither a Roman nor an African, I'm utterly without bias.  
Come and open the door! I'm desolate.  
Ah, my companion and host!  
Your guest of months and years  
Is shivering as ripples  
In front of the door.  
There is no hail and no death,  
If you hear a sound it is the conversation between teeth and chill.  
I have come tonight to pay back my debts to you  
And clear our accounts.  
Do you say it's too late, it's dawn, the morn is at hand?  
You are deluded, this is not the scarlet after the dawn.  
My companion! This is a chill-struck ear,  
The memento of winter's cold smack.  
The lantern of the sky, living or dead, is hidden  
In the labyrinthine thick coffin of gloom, besmeared with death.  
My companion! Go and kindle the light of wine,  
Night is indistinguishable from the day.  
They won't greet you back.  
The weather is dismal, the doors are closed,  
The heads thrust in collars, the hands hidden.  
The breath is a cloud, the hearts are heavy,  
The trees crystalline skeletons,  
The earth is dead-hearted, the sky's vault low,

The moon and sun are hazy,  
It's winter.  
..

2. Another Translation

## Reign of Winter

*Translated by Maryam Dilmaghani*

And if you ever greet them  
they will not pause one instant  
to greet you back.  
Heads are hanging sternly lowly.  
..

And if you salute the passing friends  
They will not raise their heads  
They will not move their gaze  
to even glance at your face.  
..

The sight is lost in an opaque, thick haze.  
No sign of the stars: They no longer blaze!  
The eyes see no more-but one step ahead:  
We pass silent and sombre with our tumbling tread.  
To a passing man, it is your hand that you lend  
Only hesitantly he extends his to you, Alas My Friend!  
The air is bitter cold and cruel, the route is a dead-end! ''  
You exhale and your breath turns into a dark blur,  
raising insolently a wall in front of your eye.  
If this is your own breath then what could you expect  
from your friends –of far-away or close-by?  
..

O My Honest Saviour!  
O My Old Virtuous Companion!  
I hail you with reverence and respect!  
Welcome me back!  
Open me your door! ''  
It is me, it's me: Your visitor of all nights!  
It is me, it's me: The sorrowful errant!  
It is me: The discarded, The beaten stone!  
It is me: The injury to Creation; The song out of tune!  
Recall? Not the black, not the white: The colourless buffoon!  
Come and open me the door!  
I am freezing; open the door before!  
..

O Counterpart! O Generous Host!  
Your usual guest is trembling in the icy outside!  
And if you have ever heard a sound:  
It is not raining and in this lane there is not even a soul!  
The noise is from the encounter of my teeth  
with this overwhelming cold.  
..

Tonight I am here to reimburse you in mass!  
I am here to go clear in front of a wine-glass!  
Do not say "It's late; it's almost the crack of dawn!"

The sky is deceitful with its blushed fawn! ''  
This red is not from the rays of light;  
The red is the imprint of this cold's shameless clout!  
The pendant of the bosom of the heavens, Sun,-dead or afoot-  
is buried, obscured, beneath the weight of a nine-storey vault! ''  
O Counterpart! O Generous Host!  
Pour wine into the glass to light up this bitter exile:  
You see? In this winter days and nights are equal.  
''  
And if you ever greet them  
they will not pause one instant  
to greet you back. ''  
The air is heavy, the doors are closed,  
Heads hang lowly, and hands are cloaked.  
Your breath turns to a dark shadow,  
Hearts are fading away under the sway of sorrow. ''  
The trees are naked, like frozen, forsaken bones,  
Earth is desolate, Sky is falling down.  
Moon and Sun are lost behind Loads of Litter:  
It is, indeed,  
The Reign of Winter. ''

3. Another translation

## Winter

Translated by [Iraj Bashiri](#)

Your greetings they'll ignore.  
With their heads resting on their chests,  
They seek warmth from their breasts,  
None affords to lift a head to greet the guests.

Vision is limited,  
The road's dark and slick.  
Your extended friendly hand is refused,  
Not because they are confused;  
They rather keep their hands where they are warmed.  
It is frightfully cold. Do not be alarmed.

Observe your breath,  
Leaving the warmth of your breast;  
Turns into a dark cloud  
Before it rests  
On the wall before your chest.

If your breath is this unkind,  
What is amiss; if  
Distant and near friends,  
Were to keep you out of mind?

My manly Messiah,  
Uncompromising man of faith!  
Winter is cowardly and cold,  
You keep the words warm,  
Sustain that stance bold.

Accept my greetings.  
Let me in.  
Your rightly guest:  
The pedestrian rock,  
The curse of creation,  
The uneven melody.

Allow this pest, a moment of rest.  
I am not from Rome or Africa.  
Allow the Africans the south,  
North, the Romans.  
Colorblind I am,  
Enough for both.

Let me in!  
Let my sorrow in!  
Be a good host,  
To your ever-present guest,  
Who shivers behind your door.  
Have mercy on the poor.

There is no hail.  
You may have heard a tale,  
There exists no death,  
Only chattering teeth and a short breath.

Tonight I intend to pay back  
The account for which I lack  
It is not too late  
It is not midnight  
There is no morning  
Don't be fooled by the dawn's false trap.

My frozen red ears  
Bespeak winter's harsh slap.  
And your universal sun  
At the mercy of each breath,  
Rather than your coffin  
Brightens the hidden cave of death.

Dear friend, with wine,  
Illumine the sight;  
Night is day  
Day is night.

They'll ignore your greeting  
Amid this depressing weather  
Doors are shut  
Heads on chests  
Hands hidden,  
Hopes are cruelly cut.

Trees are but  
Crystalline skeletons,  
The sky's moved closer;  
The land is devoid of life,  
Dimmed are the sun and the moon  
Winter is rife.