

An Evening Alone

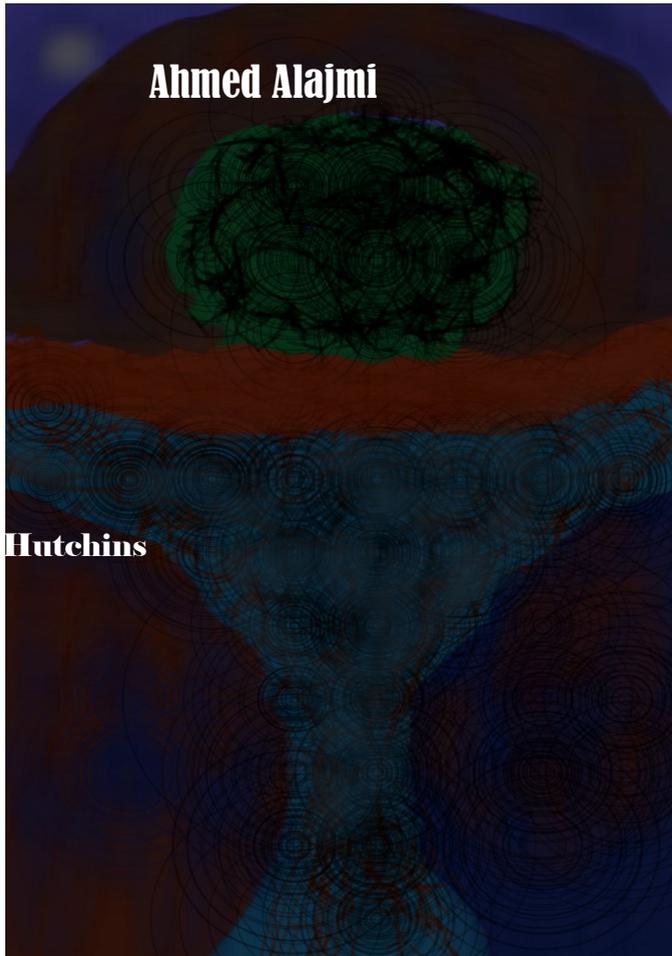
poetry

Ahmed Alajmi

Translated

by

William M. Hutchins



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I'm Alluding to the Sun

*I won't find you
And will continue sketching the lamp
outside.*

Doubts

*Because the tree
Visits me continually,
Because the lamps
Speak only in my presence,
And because I
Nourish the stars with my tongue,
All this interplay occurs
While you're asleep,
And that's why you think I'm
Disloyal!*

A Search

*You all may notice
Me opening
The carton's packs
Or searching through
The tree's leaves
For one that's falling
And see that once I look
At your faces
I look again
Seeking a tender night
With splendid weather
That I spent alone!*

A Choice

*I love the night dearly;
Only it
Can free me
From my shadow,
And that's why
I may sense freedom
When it's near me,
Especially;
If you all gang up on me
I read a book
About sex
And select a star
To light my bed!*

Loneliness

*How can I leave
A moonlit night?
Shouldn't I
Hug you
And let the breeze protect us?
This is all I hear
Of the nighttime pests' refrain
As I
Head to bed
Alone!*

Friendship

*Who said I
Don't like sitting in the kitchen?
While calm is fresh
And the lamp hanging
Above the table
Renews its spirit for me,
I can
Chat with myself
And with the plate that holds
Only the words
I can't remember!*

An Attempt

Occasionally
I have trouble interpreting
My dreams
Unless I'm in front of the mirror
Or alone with the lingering void,
Because when the day
Begins to slip away,
Leaving its cloak over my shoulder,
I frequently
Resort to a tranquil book
To seek the scent of friends!

Delight

*Who among you
Saw me yesterday
When I was overjoyed?
Especially
As my fingers stroked
My son's lustrous hair
And wove with it tales
Of butterflies and foxes!*

An Explanation

*Nothing I've told you
Ever happened!
Because when I sleep alone
Dreams feel
Compassionate
And fill
All the room's boughs,
And this is why
I smile
And the sky turns blue!*

A Trip

*To keep from dying
I shave
And dress
Above your expectations!
I choose a corner in the dwelling
And begin to reveal
My talents.
So for a time
I whistle
And then
I listen to the shrubs
Of my childhood.
This lovely trip
Only takes place
When I'm alone
At night!*

Chatter

*In the apathetic bar
I rattle on inanely
Exactly
Like a boulder;
I debate sordid topics.
I stick my words
To the table,
And this is what
My friends do too.
That's why
The night suffers from drivel*

Criticism

*Have you forgotten love?
There was a time when I
Didn't allow time
For listening to larks and warblers;
Similarly
I broach the sea each day
But don't smile
And haven't planted a rosebush
In my garden.
I wonder
Whether women will understand
What I'm up to
If I look
At the sky tonight
To refresh the stars' memory?*

Evasion

*When the day crushes me,
I think of my friend
The night,
And these are my greatest attempts
At living,
But
--My poor cat—
I often let her
Fill the heavens with meows
As she sagely rubs against the walls
While I
Leap from one evasion
To the next!*

Music Making

*I'm not searching for my shadow
In this pile
Of signs,
But there is an evening
That doesn't understand what it means for me to sit
On a new bough
Contemplating time's dagger
And clasping a guitar
To unfasten my friends' necklace.*

Rustling

*Come with me,
Come let's change the sky's color.
We'll plant our lips
On the body of the wind.
We'll buy seeds
And listen to the rustling of our glances
At the twilight.
Don't feel disconcerted.
No one is concerned with our hands
When they fly
In the area filled
With jittery hearts.
It doesn't matter what happens in the film;
What's important is for our hands to clasp
And for the clouds to thicken
Their clothes.*

Seduction

*Why is the moon
More vigilant tonight
And soaring more gracefully?
Perhaps it acts like that
For all of you, too,
Not taking anything from its hand.
I'll stay at home
To write about it,
Because this adolescent
Is even readier to repeat
Its feats from last night,
When it escorted me
To the tavern's door;
But as I went inside
It left me to say adieu to the night all by myself,
While it tempted me
Through the glass!*

Memories

*I seize a dove from the air
And follow a faint cry
As the sky scatters clouds
In my path
While the full moon
Races through the void
And my secrets approach
Little by little
The seashore,
And there, where
My face reaches its zenith,
I release the dove, asking it
Whether I'll be able
To use this confused night
To cleanse my fingers
With the sands of my memories!*

Sorrow

*There: the sky has fallen asleep,
Leaving behind
Only small lamps,
That distribute their grief
To curb the stars' playful intrusions;
So why does the night weep,
Letting its tears
Till my heart?
A child may be
On his way to the hospital now
Or the boy who
Sold me a rose
May still be scavenging through the trash;
Perhaps tomorrow
I'll seek out a silent tree
And sling into its knapsack
My other queries!*

Stars

*While the night plays its thoughts,
Allowing stars to dance naked,
We sit—me and my portable radio—
On an old table
And as always
I gaze at the tedious towers.
When the scales drop
Their arms on our table,
The radio begins to stammer;
This poor, sick planet—
Bulldozers destroy its nesting birds,
Rockets
Target its mountain wildflowers, and
Bombs shatter its ribcage.*

*Little stars would be only too happy
To bathe in its lakes
And serve as dolls for its children,
But they fear the gods of war
Who can
Pin stars
On their shoulders!*

