NEDIM TÜRFENT
IMPRISONED WRITER
The soul and the beast

Nedim Türfent

We are our own devils: we are expelling ourselves from our heaven.

Goethe

Who am I?
I have a world of colours, voices, languages
And all sorts of nations.
I am the oppressor and the oppressed
And the self-styled innocent number one.
Grab the early hat of the bold and mad.
I am as low as Machiavelli
I am as strong, and shabby as Kant.
I am an ant, sacrificing my heart, my bowels.

Sometime Drie Quinte
Sometimes Bobby Sands.
But one side of me is always a child.
And as taught as Zoe in My Sweet Orange Tree
Another side of me is in nature.
Permanent, determined. A combatant.
Like Pippin and the galley slave.
I wear the bump by bump in Rapha.
I become Femen in Kiev
I am exiled from my mother's womb in Canberra.
I deep in many cradles in Moscow ...
I live in despair and as ever in Beirut, in a cage in Korea.
I am embedded with Layton in Baghdad, in underground shelters in Sarajevo.
I am in the desert, and my body is a ball of flames.
I am the daydream in Saddam.

Each of the graves in Erbil
I am as old as one hundred years, a century in Japan
If I reach adolescence in Baghdad, how happy I am!

One part of me is a poet, another part is a murderer, a solver.
I am my life in New York.
Here the prediction, the prompt.
I am your and I am deprived ...
I am a capitalist and I am a communist
I am a revolutionary in Caracas.

I am a scientist in the Far East
Knowledge and wisdom begin in the Star East ...
Whether you name me Sophie,
Or Markus, or Napoleon.
My heart is sometimes as big as the Minotaur enter.
I become an assassin as Typhus Stalk in Lebanon.
You ask my name in Auschwitz, it is Else Weiss.
I am a young Kurd from Kobane, I have not hit the shores.

I am the dead body they have slapped your calloused conscience
I am Ayman Kurd from Kobane, I haven't hit the shore.
I am Aylan, I am not here.
I become as anxious as Hrant Dink in Istanbul.
Or Mephisto, or Sisyphus; 
Whetheryou name me Sophie,
I am a scientist in the Far East
I am a guerrilla in Latin America
I am a mother of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires
from hunger in Mogadishu ...

As you can see
I play saxophone in Glasgow, I am 60 years old.
I am a capital and I am a communist
I am poor and I am deprived ...

Herethe proletariat, there the pariah
I am filthy rich in New York
If I reach adolescence in Baghdad, how happy I am!

Each of the graves in Sana'a
I wander the library and musuem in Dublin,
I lived deep in the Amazon jungle ...
I am embedded with history in Budapest, in underground shelters in Sarajevo.
I live in skyscrapers one every corner in Dubai, in a cage in Korea.
I am the oppressor and the oppressed
I have a world of colours, voices, languages

Who am I?
'Ve are our own devils; we are expelling ourselves from our heaven.' Goethe.

The Soul and the Beast,' published here, has been translated from Nedim's collection by Turkish-Australian poet, Hidayet Ceylan. Full details, including the original text in Turkish, are available at penmelbourne.org. It has been a complex process of dialogue about the translation, as we discuss the meanings and interpretations, without the presence and affirmation of the poet himself. Please read the poem, find out about Nedim's circumstances, join our work for Nedim, and write to him in solidarity.

Nedim TÜRFEKT

Nedim’s story

Nedim Türfent, an Arab-Kurdish journalist and poet, was imprisoned in 2017 after publishing an article about the treatment of Kurdish civilians in south-east Turkey. Nedim Türfent, the Vice-Chair of PEN Melbourne’s Writers-in-Prison program, explains how Nedim Türkfen became an honorary member of PEN Melbourne.

On 4 January 2020, Nedim Türfent wrote his first card to us. We were moved by his compassion and concern about children in his circumstances. I thought of them. The pain of imagining them, the sufferings of the Turkish state, the suffering of the Kurdish people, we were...