

ON THE DEATH OF MY DEAR FRIEND NADA ADIB HADDAD (JULY 5, 1995)

*She's dead,
dead,
and all the city,
her city,
weeps for her.*

*We stare at her,
a bundle of flesh and bone,
her crowns and bracelets,
perfumes and soaps,
like toys,
long forgotten.*

*Her diamonds and rings
lie about her,
unkempt,
disheveled*

*her perfume phials
and her colored jars
jumpy, tense,
careful that no scent break loose to startle her.
The flowers in her room
gasp for breath
sniffing up whatever meager air is left for her.
Out, out, throw them out.*

*The shells rip the dark,
and cars blow up flashing the sky,
blood trickles at her doorstep,
the reek of corpses
wafts from the bloated graveyard
right into her bedroom.*

*Panic-stricken, she drinks the magic herbs
to wile the evil spells away.*

*The sea-foam caressing her thighs,
gathers momentum,
splashes upon the shore,
drenching the air.
She sprinkles her holy waters
and fixes her gaze:
the breeze sloughs its musty skin
and stares back,
pure, naked, fragrant,
like a god out of the waves.*

*She stretches herself on the shore
and dreams of purple cloaks,
robes rustling
on marble floors,
and gods scouring the world
in search of the maiden.*

*She awakens,
stretches her arms to touch the triton.*

*A hell hound leaps on her,
runs his fangs through her flesh,
gulps her pounding heart,
forcing her to disgorge
all the magic herbs and antidotes
she had stored for years*

*The princess is dead.
where is the charm that will wake her up?*

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