

# A Reading of Seyhan Eroçelik's *Rosestrikes & Coffee Grinds*

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## I. *Eda* - The Mirror

Seyhan Eroçelik's *Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds* was published in 1997. It belongs to a group of poetry books published in the 1990's, very near to each other in time, pointing to a major change in Turkish Poetry. A few others of these works include Enis Batur's "Passport" (*The Grey Divan*, 1990), Lale Müldür's "Waking to Constantinople" (*The Book of Series*, 1991), küçük Iskender's *souljam* (1994), Ahmet Güntan's *Romeo and Romeo* (1995) and Sami Baydar's total poetic output the first book of which *The Gentlemen of the World* was published in 1987 and the last *nicholas's portrait* in 2005.

Though each very distinct and individual, these works possess common characteristics which place them under the rubric *The Poetry of Motion*. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century Turkish poetry created a body of poetry with unique sensibility and its own poetics. This poetics is called *Eda*<sup>1</sup>. One crucial element of *Eda* is its acute sensitivity to the historical moment and the location, in this case the city of Istanbul, in which it was written. It bends to them and is shaped by them. Instead of crafting political arguments, usually an *Eda* poem functions as a passive mirror, the experience of reading it being that of looking into a text which sheds light with dazzling clarity on the specific moment of the poem's own emergence and of the person reading it. It combines a historical condition and a spiritual response to it. It is attuned to the forces --often suppressed, tacit or below the surface-- in the populace which are precipitating historical changes. It constitutes an implicit but potent commentary on them. *The Poetry of Motion* constitutes *Eda*'s spiritual response to a pivotal historical moment in the 1990's.

The major movement which preceded *The Poetry of Motion* was *The Second New* whose major works were written from the early 1950's to 1970. During that period, Istanbul was a city of around one million people with a distinct topological/ psychic structure. Lying around a harbor, it was split by an inlet, The Golden Horn, into two: the old city in the south which was once the site of old Byzantium and the capital of The Ottoman Empire and Galata, the new city with crooked streets on a hill in the north. The latter was where the ethnic minorities, Greeks, Armenians, Jews lived, and the fleshpots, the entertainment district of the city were located. Around this dichotomy, *The Second New* created a

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<sup>1</sup> To find out more about *Eda* and *The Poetry of Motion* see the essays "The Idea of A Book," the introduction to *Eda: An Anthology of Contemporary Turkish Poetry*, edited by Murat Nemet-Nejat (Talisman Books, 2004) and "Turkey's Mysterious Motions and Turkish Poetry" (*Daily Star*, 2004; *Translation Review*, 2005, [http://www.ziyalan.com/marmara/murat\\_nemet\\_nejat4.h](http://www.ziyalan.com/marmara/murat_nemet_nejat4.h))

poetry based on a dialectic between official and subversive, open and secret, sanctioned and forbidden. A lot of *The Second New* poetry revolves around revelations, often of an erotic or political nature or both. (It sustains an implicit parallel between open and hidden places of the city and the revealed and hidden parts of a woman's body):

The overweening thrust of *The Second New* is expanding consciousness, in depth (revealing secrets) and range of emotions (expanding poetic styles)... That's why *Pigeon English*, Süreya's first book, is a series of lyrics of seduction from the male point of view. What is amazing about them is the power dimension of the eroticism –love as a stripping of both the body and mystery.- In spectacular image combinations, the poems implicate, seduce the reader into the act –keeping him or her grasping/gasping for objectivity. These image combinations are the great contribution of Süreya to Turkish poetry. They release the sado-masochistic, subversive side of Sufism into contemporary Turkish....

Ece Ayhan had to self-publish his first book, *Miss Kinar's Waters*. Instead of like Süreya's exuding a seductive masculine eroticism, Ayhan's book is opaque, personal, trying to hide, as much as to reveal.... All the poems are from the point of view of the victim, the weak, the powerless, including seduced children turned hustlers; many are gay. Even when the poem is from the angle of the seducer, e.g. in "Wall Street" ("Kambiyo"), the tone is elegiac. Eroticism is tinged with suppressed rage [being victimized], which in flashes pierces through as implicit commentary. These flashes weave a melody whose emotional tone is lucid, transparent; but whose meaning eludes us, is veiled...

The pursuit of secrets is the metaphysical resonance driving *The Second New* poets..<sup>2</sup>

## II. The Crisis of the City and *The Poetry of Motion*

From the 1960's onward Istanbul underwent a phenomenal expansion of population which, by the mid-1980's, had reached over twelve million. The poets of that over twenty-year period have difficulty adjusting to these changes. They continue to write a poetry based almost completely on imagery, following in the footsteps of *The Second New*. By the late 1980's and early 1990's, Turkish Poetry --*Eda*-- was at a moment of crisis. Outside rare, exceptional poems, Turkish poets were producing work which had little to do with the environment in which the work was being written. The poetry of *The Second New* depended on and reflected a relatively small city with clear demarcations, the ambiguous, evocative blur in its imagery implying secrets. By the mid-1990's, Galata (the heart of *The Second New*) and the old city had become a peripheral part of the city, the great majority of life having moved to northern suburbs, non-existent in the 1960's, or to the Asian side. The centrality of The Galata Bridge in the physical and mental traffic

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<sup>2</sup> *Eda*, pp. 13/6.

of the city, which connected the old city to Galata, was replaced by the two bridges over The Bosphorus connecting the European and Asian sides and which had not been built in the 1960's. By the 1990's, one of the quintessential qualities of *Eda* was missing from Turkish poetry: its intimate link with the physical and psychic reality of its environment. It had become a poetry written about a city which did not exist.

Though *The Poetry of Motion* is the poetic response to this urban crisis, before its occurrence a historical event takes place:

... [In] the early 1990's Istanbul underwent a subtle conceptual transformation, in addition to its numerical one. With the fall of the Soviet Union, it became an economic and spiritual focal point as people converged from former satellite countries in the West and Turkish republics in the East, in search of goods and ideas formerly unavailable or suppressed in their countries. At this point, Istanbul became transformed from a national city of twelve million to a global metropolis, a crossing point of conflicting dreams.

... [*The Poetry of Motion*] reflects this tectonic, strategic change.... In the new poetry the language *flattens* [italics my own]. The stylistic essence of the best poems of the 1990's is motion. Often written in long sinuous lines, in them the thought, the eye, the image never stay in one place, constantly shifting conceptual, ideological, or identity lines. The music of this motion across borders echoes Istanbul as the global city.

In each poem, two seemingly irreconcilable concepts (or desires) are superimposed on each other, creating a flat, unified field. The poems reflect the impulse towards synthesis at the heart of [*The Poetry of Motion*].<sup>3</sup>

An essentially Eastern response to the 21st century, *The Poetry of Motion* is after syntheses. Echoing the Sufi belief that divine love reduces multiplicities into unity, conflicting forces in each poem are pulled together to create a field where psychic boundaries are eliminated, where the content of the poem turns into pure motion --free movements of thought/ light across limits. In this process, Turkish poetry crosses its own boundaries, reflecting the chaotic and rejuvenating forces released after the fall of The Soviet Union in the world:

“In the poetry of the 1990's Istanbul changes from a physical place into an idea, an elusive there, a basically mystical, dream space of pure motion...”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “Turkey’s Mysterious Motions and Turkish Poetry,” *Translation Review*, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> *Eda*, p. 18

### III. *Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds*: The Split of Time

*Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds* is split into two, a before and an after. *Coffee Grinds* is the before. It consists of twenty-four fortune readings --sinuous, meandering, open-ended narratives of hope and anxiety, where the reader and the listener look at a coffee cup which has the shape of the sky. Together, they create a mirror across which are traced the fluid motions of desire, its expansive innocence before being dashed by the future. The grounds mixed with liquid create Rorschach tests spread at random over which, teasingly and cajoled by a listener, the eye spins its cadences of hope, magically transforming the materiality of solid and liquid into words --into light.

*Rosestrikes*, the second part of the poem, is repetitive, minimalist, a poem of obsessive variations around the Islamic Sufi symbol, the rose. It is about the after --what has already happened-- about loss. The poems depict states of disintegration where the consciousness is yearning for a state of union, the before. "To L C.," for instance, is a farewell poem where loss (death, separation) and the memory of a once perfect physical union are superimposed on each other into one single moment:

*To L.C.*

We returned each others' roses  
to each other.  
Yours's still in my *h eart-*  
*h.*  
mine,  
in my hand.

my heel full of thorns.

leave  
the rose with its leaves,  
leave the leaves with their rose,  
both smiling<sup>5</sup>

embracing

In Seyhan Erozçelik's *Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds* two strands of Sufism are pulled together. One is the Central Asian shamanism from which its animistic impulse, unifying man's subjectivity and nature, derives. The other is the intellectual stricture, the bent Islam puts on this basically pagan impulse.

While *Coffee Grinds* expands with continuous metamorphoses --animals, clouds and other forces of nature changing shape as if there is no difference, no distance between human psyche and nature-- the repetitive, almost reductive, image/ language of *Rosestrikes* implode, suggesting a counter-balancing restraint. *Rosestrikes* suggests that

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<sup>5</sup> In Turkish, "rose" and "smile" are the same word: "gül."

the chaotic, centrifugal expansion of man into nature --where subjectivity merges with objects around it-- can not be sustained; but must be sublimated by separation --human and intellectual-- by thought and loss. While *Coffee Grinds* is about innocence --though of a puckish, teasing sort-- *Rosestrikes* is about experience when innocence/union is split into endless particles.

Nevertheless, typical of *The Poetry of Motion*, each section contains echoes of the other. Coffee grinds themselves are made of endless particles. On the other hand, while, underlying *Rosestrikes*, there is a love story of loss and separation, there is also the hint in the final poem “Rosebud” that the loss can be/is transcended by a greater love once the ego is smashed into smithereens, losing itself.

*Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds* reveals the dialectic at the heart of Sufism, the endless struggle between forces of disintegration and chaos and of counterbalancing unity and love. They permeate the poem in exquisite equilibrium.

#### **IV. Love and *Rosestrikes***

While desire is eternal and unobstructed, love is only possible from a state of fallen grace --a consciousness of loss.

Love in *Rosestrikes* has three aspects, political, human and divine, each requiring violence resulting in loss or ego immolation to be fully realized. In the English version of the poem, they are loosely grouped under three different headings. The section “Rosestrikes” refers more to political or sexual love. In these poems images of a town or the self burning --suggesting war-- are often yoked to graphic images of a sexual content, “A fire in the rose,” “Bushrose” and “Windrose” creating such a sequence.<sup>6</sup> The second, the “Moody Love” section focuses on the end of a love affair, the affair already off its peak of perfect physical union and in the process of disintegration.

In “Rosebud” the protagonist, a young boy, destroys the perfect unity in nature denoted by a web of “alifs” (signs for infinity) describing frost (“frost is woven with straight lines, i.e., with alifs/ crossing each other. Manna pouring from above...”) when he crushes the frost with the heel. The act implies both a thrill of almost a sexual nature and a trauma, its cause undefined but palpably there. The trauma is accompanied by a disintegration of the self, the speaker referring to himself doing the act in the third person, “Frost bitten,/ I, his innocent face/ in its most tormented form...<sup>7</sup>, “... Stinging nettles are blooming in my

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<sup>6</sup> In an essay I wrote translating this section in 2006 “Insurrection and the Dreaded Beauty of Sufism - Ideas Towards a Fundamentalist Poetics” I pointed how the Turkish Sufism’s focus on suffering and blood rather than dancing and wine as a path to ecstasy led to a poetry which reflected the Iraq War from the Iraqi side, both of the towns and houses burning and the psychology, the belief system of the suicide bomber. His/her self-immolation is a Sufi political act, a sacrifice, leading to a greater love, union with God. (See *Bombay Gin, Issue 32*, The Naropa Press, 2006, pp. 57/8.)

<sup>7</sup> “Rosebud”(“The walk”)

heart./ A kid, as me, that is my heel, crushed/ the frost. Fragments of frost broke the weave/ In the heart, cut it loose.” Nevertheless, the poem ends with a suggestion that this traumatic alienation and violence may be the path to a greater vision. In other words, the poem ends by pointing to the beginning of the whole poem, to the *Coffee Grinds* section which embodies the perfect state of union, between the mind and the world, which *Rosestrikes* in its fragmented obsessiveness is trying to reach back or point to:

As the rainbow pleases mankind,  
so does, it seems, crushing frost.

Because the inside of frost is hollow, the sound it makes being crushed  
is interesting.

...

As if a piece of music.  
Exactly like the crushing of a particularly thin glass.  
Maybe of a crystal bone.<sup>8</sup>

## V. Freedom in *Coffee Grinds* -- Stations of Love

A mountain. Flying to the sky. (As in all fortunes, is this mountain *an inner distress*? Shouldn't words, as moving targets, in fortunes also have various meanings? And couldn't unknown words enrich the interpretation, therefore a fortune?)

The mountain is flying to the sky, continuing to fly, leaving its main mass of land behind. But also know that that block of mother land also will not remain where it was –are themselves blocks which will continue to fly. As big pieces, as small pieces they will fly to the sky, there forming a mountain.

Mountain, in the sky. Even though their densities are different, only clouds may sustain their existence as mass. If so, what's this mountain which has rediscovered itself doing here?

*You* can tell me that. But it seems you're emptying your insides. And this, in the tongue of *our* coffee grinds, means an easing up. (Easing up block by block. If it happened all at once, it'd be like an electro-shock. Because of that, this way is a good thing. Maybe also the pace has to do with your personality.)

With this passing of the mountain to the sky, as if you are also being reborn. Midway, between sky and earth. And as if with your rebirth a crescent is oozing out from your skirt and mowing the skirt of the mountain.

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<sup>8</sup> Rosebud”(“The Crush”)

Along with a cat in silhouette and a pregnant pigeon (or is it malignant) flying to the sky.

Between sky and earth, or, seen another way, like the depths of the sea. Heavy, silent, or functioning among the noises of the depth of the sea, the migrating mountain, parcels of mountain, rocks, stones, the silhouette of the cat, the pregnant pigeon, *you* wearing a long gown, tiny fish, a crescent moon like the knife... you're in that sea.

Or seen from another angle...

The crescent is also on the saucer of the cup, in addition, exactly opposite the crescent inside the cup. Exactly like the reflection of a mirror, the right side on the left. The left, on the right, etc. (Or, to say more, the West in the east, the North south...)

According to looking in the mirror, hearts are on the right.

Does this alter anything, anything?

Opposite the crescent (the one in the saucer, that is crescent in the mirror) there is a *star*. (Like a flag<sup>9</sup>, exactly!)

The crescent becoming a full moon, that star also will keep growing.

(Why the mountain is migrating to the sky is now crystal clear.)

Finito!

## VI. Translation Strategies

“Things do not connect; they correspond. That is what makes it possible for a poet to translate real objects, to bring them across language as clearly as he can bring them across time. That tree you saw in Spain is a tree I could never have seen in California, that lemon has a different smell and a different taste. BUT the answer is this --every place and every time has a real object to *correspond* with your real object --that lemon may become this lemon or it may even become this piece of seaweed, or in this particular color of gray in this ocean. One does not need to imagine that lemon; one needs to discover it.

Even these letters. They *correspond* with something. (I don't know what) that you have written (perhaps as unapparently as that lemon corresponds to this piece of seaweed) and, in turn, some future poet will write something which *corresponds* to them. That is how we dead men write to each other.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Turkish flag has a crescent with a star inside against a red field.

<sup>10</sup> *After Lorca*, (*The Collected Books of Jack Spicer*, Black Sparrow Press, 1996, p. 34

The heart of *Coffee Grinds* is the crystalline purity of its movements, which project an almost perfect state of harmony between the subjective mind --wishes, hopes, dreams, the way the mind projects itself into the world eliminating distance-- and the world. The central image of the section is the mirror --the cup mirroring the sky, the coffee grounds the mind-- its illusionary transparence. The poem consists of the traces the mind etches on this transparence, the mental calligraphy it creates. *Coffee Grinds* is a quintessential *Poem of Motion*. Eroçelik's style in this section --his long, flat lines verging on but never quite becoming prose-- creates the vehicle for the arabesque the language draws, its almost visual dimension<sup>11</sup>. Since motion --specifically *its shape*-- is the essence of the poem --movement as essence-- my purpose as a translator has been to preserve all the creases, darts, tugs, etc., the "awkward," ritualistic motions of the original in English, acting as a flow chart --a very precise one-- of the original's cadences. The translation acts as a recorder/ recoder of that flow as time.

In *Rosestrikes*, Eroçelik's style looks back to the 1960's *Second New* poet Ece Ayhan, whose style involves exploring and exploiting multiple layering of words in puns, aural deconstructions, etc.<sup>12</sup> Instead of moving on a flat, visual surface, in *Rosestrikes* the poems progress *inside* words, the repetitive, obsessive echoes variant, multiple meanings of a given word create rubbing against each other.<sup>13</sup> *Rosestrikes* is built around a small group of word/ sound constellations. The basic three are: ay (moon, ah!)/ aya (to the moon, holy), ayva (quince), ayi (the animal bear); gül (rose), gül (to smile). The third is built around a deconstruction of the word "kiragi" (frost). "Kir-" means "meadow," "to break," "to hurt"; "ag" means "web, net," "to rise to the sky"; "agi" means "poison."<sup>14</sup> "Rosebud," the penultimate poem in the book, is a narrative woven around the multiple meanings of a word, "a poem, but a cry inside one word." In fact, "Rosebud" is a narrative *into* the potential, buried meanings of the word "Kiragi," exploding them.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The sinuous, flat line, without the jump cuts, constitutes also the style of Lale Müldür's "Waking to Constantinople" and Enis Batur's "Passport." The line derives from *The Second New* poet İlhan Berk's "long line" which in many ways anticipates and opens the path to *The Poetry of Motion*. See *Eda*, "The Idea of A Book," pp.16/20; *Eda*, "Annotations on Lale Müldür's 'Waking to Constantinople,'" pp. 334/6.

<sup>12</sup> See Ece Ayhan. *A Blind Cat Black and Orthodoxies* (Sun & Moon Press, 1997), to be reprinted by Green Integer Press in 2011..

<sup>13</sup> This is relatively easier to do in Turkish because of its narrow sound range due to vowel harmony. Vowels in Turkish are divided into narrow and open ones. If a word starts with an open vowel, or vice versa, as a general rule, the other vowels in the word must follow suit.

<sup>14</sup> Eroçelik had a book of poetry published in 1991 entitled *Kiragi*.

<sup>15</sup> The English version of "Rosebud" in *Rosestrikes* is preceded by two diagrams. one of them hand-drawn by Eroçelik showing the multiple meanings of the word "Kiragi." It appears that some of the hermetic, "sacred" meanings of Turkish --the poetic quality of *Eda* in it-- can only be transferred into English visually, as space where chronological time and syntactic sequencing thins out into multiple directions.



The main challenge translating *Rosestrikes* is that the poetic center of the poem, its *Eda*, is totally sealed, in Walter Benjamin's words, in the specific "modes of intention"<sup>16</sup> of Turkish. The same three words in English are devoid of any mesh of aural associations. It is paradoxically this elusive otherness which elicits the almost erotic impulse to translate it, giving it, again in Benjamin's words, "translatibility."<sup>17</sup> My solution was to search for possible corresponding verbal constellations in English. My central discovery turned out to be the group "hearth-heart-earth-death" which through its "fire" and "death" connotations creates a wormhole --a parallel verbal space-- to the original poem, fire and burning being the engines of spiritual dissolution and rebirth in Turkish Sufism and in Eroçelik's poem.<sup>18</sup> Here, the four words generate their own space, parallel to but to some degree independent from the original. The second discovery was the pun between "leave" (belonging to plants) and "leave" (meaning departure and loss), with its own nexus of vegetal life and yearning. The third was the odd, dissonant correspondence between the flower "rose" and "rose" as the past tense of "to rise," as in "the moon rose." The rose and the moon consistently exchange places, as twin objects, in Eroçelik's poem in Turkish.

## VII. Correspondence - The Reality of Jack Spicer's Real Objects

While the translation of *Telve/ Coffee Grinds* tries to achieve a partially visual perfect "faithfulness," as in a mirror, the translations in *Rosestrikes* often split the originals into fragments. This is necessary partly because due to its wider sound range it is much harder to sustain obsessive aural sequences in English, and the original must be diverted into two. What is more, the constellation of words in English --heart, hearth, earth, death, for instance-- having its own dynamic energy, takes the original piece in its own direction, creating a number of meta-poems --not in the original, but spun out of them.<sup>19</sup> It is through the interactions among the meta poems and fragments that the corresponding parallel space of the poem in English is created. *Rosestrikes* looks at its original *Gül* distortedly, as if through a broken glass darkly.

One can look at a sequence of three poems in the book, "H-Rose," "Jamrose" and "Rosecandy," to get a sense of the process. The first is a meta-poem generated from the first three lines of the Turkish original. "Jamrose" is almost a perfect replication of that original poem. "Rosecandy" is, except for the last line, a quite faithful re-writing of a poem which appears three poems later in the original. It is the letter "h," popping out of the word "hearth" and sparking/sparkling as "the gibberish/ of the bursting hearth//

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<sup>16</sup> "The Task of the Translator," *Illuminations*, p. 74

<sup>17</sup> "The Task," pp. 78/9.

<sup>18</sup> I hit upon the possibility of this chain of connections after reading Simon Pettet's beautiful book *Hearth* (Talisman Books, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Eroçelik's original *Gül* consists of twenty-three pieces. This number in *Rosestrikes* is forty-seven. Eroçelik himself considers number twenty-three significant. Adding to it one to represent *Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds* as a whole, he reaches number 24, which matches the number of coffee grinds readings in the book. This numerological correspondence is lost in *Rosestrikes*.

exiled// to alchemical// dots,” which seems to unify the space of the three poems, each looking separately/apart at a distance, as if “in a coma.” The letter “h” is the real object, the “seaweed,” corresponding to Spicer’s “lemons” in the original.

Here lies the paradox of Eroçelik’s *Gül* and of its translation *Rosestrikes*. *Rosestrikes* reflects the original in a “splintered” state. On the other hand, the original *Gül* also depicts states of loss --splintering from the state of oneness the earlier part *Coffee Grinds* embodies. It is a poem of experience. Every poem in *Gül* is about yearning, exile, reaching back to the state of union with the “the other” the Sufi *Arc of Descent* trying to transform itself into an *Arc of Ascent* expresses.<sup>20</sup> In a deeper sense the fragmentation in *Rosestrikes* reflects what *Gül* is. The fragmentation of the original poem in the attempt to capture its obsessive style leads the translation to reveal in itself, though inadvertently, the very nature of what the original is: a reflection of separateness from a lost unified state. Every poem both in *Gül* and *Rostrikes*, in fact *Rosestrikes* and *Coffee Grinds* as a whole, embody different states of yearning. In that way they represent the very essence of the Sufi experience; through the prism of multiplicity, disintegration and chaos to have a glimpse of a state of divine (Islamic or pagan) unity:

#### Swimrose

Magnetism  
swimmingly

the rose  
swimmingly

the sky swimmingly  
the green swimmingly

...<sup>21</sup>

Murat Nemet-Nejat

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<sup>20</sup> To read more about the Sufi *Arcs of Descent and Ascent*, see “souljam/ cangüncem: küçük Iskender’s Subjectivity,” *Eda*, pp. 339/41.

<sup>21</sup> *Rosestrikes*

## from *Rosestrikes and Coffee Grinds*

### TWO

Here, I've turned up *your* cup. (Because the grinds are a bit dried, your fortune has *set*.)

(In order for fortune to *set*, must we make coffee grinds wait? Whatever, let's look at the cup, see inside.)

A mountain. Flying to the sky. (As in all fortunes, is this mountain *an inner distress*? Shouldn't words, as moving targets, in fortunes also have various meanings? And couldn't unknown words enrich the interpretation, therefore a fortune?

The mountain is flying to the sky, continuing to fly, leaving its main mass of land behind. But also know that that block of mother land also will not remain where it was –are themselves blocks which will continue to fly. As big pieces, as small pieces they will fly to the sky, there forming a mountain.

Mountain, in the sky. Even though their densities are different, only clouds may sustain their existence as mass. If so, what's this mountain which has rediscovered itself doing here?

*You* can tell me that. But it seems you're emptying your insides. And this, in the tongue of *our* coffee grinds, means an easing up. (Easing up block by block. If it happened all at once, it'd be like an electro-shock. Because of that, this way is a good thing. Maybe also the pace has to do with your personality.)

With this passing of the mountain to the sky, as if you are also being reborn. Midway, between sky and earth. And as if with your rebirth a crescent is oozing out from your skirt and mowing the skirt of the mountain.

Along with a cat in silhouette and a pregnant pigeon (or is it malignant) flying to the sky.

Between sky and earth, or, seen another way, like the depths of the sea. Heavy, silent, or functioning among the noises of the depth of the sea, the migrating mountain, parcels of mountain, rocks, stones, the silhouette of the cat, the pregnant pigeon, *you* wearing a long gown, tiny fish, a crescent moon like the knife... you're in that sea.

Or seen from another angle...

The crescent is also on the saucer of the cup, in addition, exactly opposite the crescent inside the cup. Exactly like the reflection of a mirror, the right side on the left. The left, on the right, etc. (Or, to say more, the West in the east, the North south...)

According to looking in the mirror, hearts are on the right.

Does this alter anything, anything?

Opposite the crescent (the one in the saucer, that is crescent in the mirror) there is a *star*. (Like a flag<sup>22</sup>, exactly!)

The crescent becoming a full moon, that star also will keep growing.

(Why the mountain is migrating to the sky is now crystal clear.)

Finito!

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<sup>22</sup> The Turkish flag has a crescent with a star inside against a red field.

## SIX

An immense letter M. In the shape of a Moon. Or, a moon in the shape of the letter M is lighting this cup. A person with one horn (not an *equine*) is weaving for *you*. What kind is it? Like the human heart, it is knitting sadness, sitting down, meticulously. Click click. Click click.

Did I say sadness? No despair, *dis-repairing* like Penelope.

You're right behind the person with one horn. And there is someone behind you. Is it male or female, I do not know, etching writings on your back. There is a halo around your head. (Can writing be *etched*, well, this one is doing it?) Again, a noise, clicking away. (Like the mechanism inside cats. Or a spool...}

Further back a woman. From her head down, she is pouring down the moonlight. (This's the light coming from the moon above.) You're going up, opening up to the world. (The one without *sharp minarets!*) Rising, the moon is getting bigger, its light shining, a third eye is opening in her forehead, the corona is spinning.

There's a smaller moon meeting the moon above, the crescent. It's looking around. Joining its own extremities with the ends of a circle. That is, the circumference is being completed.

A confused, and as much as confused, an exciting, terrific fortune.

*You are in the hands of coffee grinds now. Coffee grinds in your hands.*

## EIGHT

A mass of coffee grinds's flying to the sky. A profound sadness is getting up, about to get up, and leave, leaving behind its space empty, that is, nothing to interpret in its stead. Either for good or evil.

A portion of universe waiting to be filled, is what's left.

Something has ended, you're relieved, have gotten rid of a burden.  
(What the load is, I can't tell.)

Inside the cup further back, a dolphin. The greatest of luck, the most propitious object. Both a fish, and with lungs. Besides...

It'll drag you with itself, to the sea.

To the sea or the sky? If sky, is freedom, sea is mother's lap.

To the sea or sky? Various cats and roosters are also dragged with you. You're on the road on a royal progress, together, towards somewhere. Two roosters, one cat and the fish.

The dolphin leading the way, a lucky and fortunate road.

(An event, clearly, affecting the whole family, by the way, good luck.)

That's what is beyond the emptiness. Something happened, you are freed. This is affecting a lot of people near you, along with you.

Affecting well and good.

A good reading. Wonderful.

Well, that's it.

## THIRTEEN

Lifting the cup, the saucer lifted with it then fell. This act made a sound.  
Before being read, fortune made a sound. Is that understood?

The mass of coffee grinds in the cup is in motion. Luck, in motion. Kismet in motion.

To where?

Towards the inside of the cup. (When I say cup, you think I mean world, yours included... don't you?)

Fortune has stalled.

I'm looking. The moving mass of grinds looks like the *Nude of Maja*, reclining in bed, hands in her hair. But there is this difference: here she is mermaid. In other words: the *Mermaid Nude of Maja*. In an ether as comfortable as mother's womb, she is reclining.<sup>23</sup>

(This mermaid isn't you. But revealing of your spiritual state, both a child and a mother. Born and giving birth. That's how it is.)

A slight danger, a fish's trying to nibble pieces from this mermaid.

This danger will be averted, you won't even notice.

Wind and sea are into each other, with places beyond the sea.

Where to?

Due to the shape of the cup I guess, a horizon in the shape of a crescent moon is also in this fortune.

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<sup>23</sup> Animal spirits populate the universe: cats, roosters, fish, dolphins, mountains (also infused with animal spirits), the sea, the sky, the crescent moon, all contained within the immensity of the arc of the horizon, which is also the dome of the coffee cup, which is the dome of the sky.

The coffee cup, the universe. The *fortune* of a specific arrangement, determined by a fusion of the drinker of the coffee and the reader of the grinds. Fate is a fusion of being and looking at that being; one reveals oneself by looking at others, using the universe as a mirror.

Everything is so clean, so peaceful.

But in the saucer, someone is carrying a gun. What it means, I couldn't make out. (That's the part of fortune which was still in motion.)

Fortune has stopped.

(Coffee grinds don't move any more.

What about kismet?)



## TWENTY

*(You're unable to settle your fortune. This is called coffee grinds anxiety.)*

The grinds have overflowed the cup.

I'll start outside.

In other words outside the cup, there is an animal trying to escape inside, or trying to *enter* your fortune. Small, ferocious, beautiful hair... with a long tail. And the path before it wide open.

That *small*, ferocious beast has sent its *replica* inside. A replica of coffee grinds oscillating inside, keeps strolling, swinging its arms, as if it owned the place, in its own country.

A person without a face, holding a flag. *(The flag's appeared in your cup again!)*

Forest beasts, singing all together.

The swollen, bubbly places inside have stretched the coffee grinds like a membrane. If I say *piff!* It will burst.

*(Piff!)*

And the replica of the replica of the small beast also is in the cup.

Now inside the cup a universe apart, a separate world.

*That world*, expanding.

From the cup to the saucer a rivulet is running, a rivulet of grinds.

The beast of fortune, that very ferocious one, is drowning in this brook.

Reborn in the cup.

To put it in another way, it's jumped a threshold.

*To another world...*

## TWENTY-ONE

Fortune has dried again<sup>24</sup>.

Let it. (The drying of fortunes show that fortunes *go faster* than our lives, it seems.)

At the bottom of the cup there is a *horizon line, water, sky, land...* all joining there, a guy has cast his tackle to the fish, is waiting. From above a strip of delicate road is descending directly towards him. Towards his thoughts.

Further back, there's a woman dancing, like the Spanish, holding waving a handkerchief. For whom is she *waving* it, why is she *waving* it, we can't tell.

A woman with wings, bending, is gathering something from the ground, some herbs. And why is she gathering them, *for whom*, we can't tell.

Another woman tossing her hair right and left is moving far away.

The crescent in the saucer has risen and *entangled* with her hair.

*(Then I touched the coffee grinds in the cup.*

*They are not dried. That's the truth!)*

We human beings, sometimes, pretend we don't know.

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<sup>24</sup> The movements of time sometimes are much slower than [the movement, forward motion of] our hopes [wishes?], like paint drying, and our reading it [Paint dries; we read it faster]. THIS ONE: The movements of time sometimes are much slower than forward motion of our hopes, like paint drying, and our reading it. YES

[The movements of time sometimes are much slower than forward motion of our hopes, like seeing paint dry, and our desire to go on with the reading it.] NO!

## Birdrose

sing  
sing!

a bird  
called

flying  
prison!

beerose

before  
sunrise  
the moon buzzes  
the darkness

bzzzzz...

the rose is paling  
in jealousy.

the bush is growing  
growing

the bush is opening  
opening

the bush's in rose bloom  
bloom

the rose is a bush  
bush

insects are carrying dust  
dust dust

roses are multiplying  
multiplying

*I have complaints only against this one rose,  
rose*

## Kinshiprose

Apple. Almond. Cherry. Sour cherry. Bramble, etc.

There is also pear and quince.

(Did I say quince? No, quench,  
Heartless. A mouth.)

Quench,  
it simply loves fruits.  
Kin of the rose,  
suitable to  
quench.

(Still in love  
with moth.)

H-Rose

the logs are cracking  
in the heart

of my kitchen

of h.                   sparkles

The gibberish  
of the bursting hearth

exiled

to alchemical

dots.

## Swimrose

Magnetism  
swimmingly

the rose  
swimmingly

the sky swimmingly  
the green swimmingly

the clock swimmingly  
i swimmingly

the cock  
swimmingly

the clock  
swimmingly

stopped  
swimmingly

magnetism

swimmingly



threesomes

the moon rises  
moonrose

i i love you  
swoonrose

where where were you  
windrose.

Bluntrose

the rose turned out to be blunt  
the heart to

S M I T H E R E E N S!

nailrose

everything  
is slanted  
towards you!

The Walk<sup>i</sup>  
“a brook hidden in lace...”

Frost is woven with straight lines, i.e., with alifs<sup>25</sup>  
crossing each other. Manna pouring from above. Dust and frost  
oppose, dust can't reach  
the manna state without  
a pour.

Alifs neutralize dust. On earth, where there is dust,  
revealing a new pattern.

Alifs, aslant each other.

*Double double double crossing*

Sunrise –and cold– is the best place to see it.

The span of frost's life, crossing a kid's  
gleeful heel (that is  
my heel) or as long as the sun's heat.

Frost is alive within the moon,  
pursuing its own pattern.

*Frost!*

A frog in the soul.

The daylight approaching, the kid steps on it.

The sky breaks down.

i'm in the web

The alifs turn to dust.

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<sup>25</sup> “Alif” is the Hebrew letter “*aleph*” in Arabic. In Arabic it is written as a diagonal slash disappearing two-thirds down. “Aleph” is also a symbol for the infinite in Georg Cantor's mathematics of transfinite sets..

The alifs which cutting please my eyes spread to the ground  
chasing me

Frost bitten,  
I, his innocent face  
in its most fiend tormented form.

Meadow crush.  
A kid's rush.

Seyhan Eroçelik  
translated from Turkish by Murat Nemet-Nejat, 2010

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