

Abdul-Latif Akel · *Palestine*

SELF-PORTRAIT

What's here?  
Empty eyes cleansing themselves in the lakes of death.  
Misery jumps out of them.  
Night wraps them up while they speak about light,  
light, my frozen hope.  
Is this my face or the face of an ancient sculpture?  
Mapped with lines,  
damned by the goddess.  
Destiny has sucked it dry  
like an abandoned well  
where the moon does not appear.  
A face like a dark cave,  
like a stretch of desert with curving roads and ditches.  
What's here  
a man coiled in himself like a snake.  
Damned by the god of the wind.  
A man like an unharvested grove  
whose ideas are bread for the flies.  
Ink and paper do not nourish him  
so torture is necessary.  
He cannot repent.  
What's here:  
Two empty eyes embracing a face of grief.  
Everything I see here resembles me.  
This is what I am.

*translated by the author*