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MINA ASSADI

THE DICTATOR’S MESSAGE

O poets
return,
we have swept
your homeland clean
of thorns and splinters
O writers
return,
to make a record of your works
we have ordered paper from all over the world
O mothers
return,
we have made all the prisons
into schools and universities
O young people
return,
and for your country’s future
lay a new foundation
O painters
return,
and on war’s blood-soaked walls
paint the white dove of peace
O architects
return,
and for all these returnees
build their houses over corpses
of their dead, who stayed and struggled