

## From Traverser



*Habib Tengour*

*translated from French by Pierre Joris*

Dubious dawn  
and sunrise sweats  
with what hairy strength tone up one's soul  
how to speak of love  
logically to love with unabating  
passion when there is no opportunity  
another question awaits the young man  
at the bus stop an enigma  
after she had thrown herself from the top of the rock  
space shrinks  
the stars pass by before midnight  
the sea riles the gaze  
what blue  
isn't it dictatorship  
one repeats the question: isn't it **dictatorship**  
you think twice  
and don't answer  
the perimeter knows  
from experience the facets are multiple

and variable according to the fashions  
 the coral snake and the leech larvae and the corrupted  
 seeds and the obtuse silence and ass licking and enflamed  
 preaching and the bastard crew and the most knowledgeable  
 shepherds and the post-battle heroes and the fucking guides  
 and their charisma created artificially by computer and the  
 paradisiacal whore to be consumed after work and the  
 premature ejaculations and the framework of the speech  
 and that it secretly frames and the snitching diviners and  
 the brain-dead henchmen in the dark corners of the  
 projects and the corrupt rectors who brandish the Book  
 and the impotent ministers who ramble on and worship  
 put up to auction and the easy prey when the flag flies  
 in the wind and the metamorphoses of the face and the  
 mouse that sodomizes the cat and the lion that loses his  
 mane and the anathema and the list that circulates and the  
 new members of the moorish baths and the closed door  
 work sessions and the friday games and transparency at  
 the polls and fake diplomas and under-the-counter bribes  
 and the congressmen pimps and the single one at the top  
 who mistrusts even when applauded his followers and the  
 popular base in agreement and the leader's haughtiness and  
 the revolutionary jolts and the late reforms and the empty  
 basket and the traitors and the turncoats and the paternal  
 reprimands and the wolf's tail and the long queues and the  
 prayer beads and heaven that doesn't wait and the B52's and  
 the panoply of missiles and the artisanal bomb in the garden  
 and the bars of the internment camps and intelligence and the  
 hood and the use of forgeries and the hands in the shadows  
 and primarily the military all branches thereof parading by.  
 ... and yet the perimeter isn't vast  
 it's bathing in a luminosity that widens it  
 and the sea  
 green in its bays tears in its middle

Inflation...

health one has to watch one's health

the children are grown already

and others grow up too many

nervous

champing at the bit in the streets where there's no room left

there are those who return from Afghanistan

those who dream of a boat to Australia

and Baghdad under the bombs

the sea veils itself black

Poverty lies in wait on its pear tree

the satellite dishes are hollow

O the beautiful promises of yesteryear

your plans are totally wrong

You mustn't believe...

my tribe which nothing sways doesn't stop

despite the successive droughts and a hurricane of fire

to brag about the deviousness of lovers

to prolixly describe the border Customs it goes through...

The sea it

inhabits a shell

remains a wild

beast in the story