

Babak Inaloo

Where Is the Jungle?

Hey, what are you standing up for? Me, I'm lost in a human jungle.
I was born under injustice & the pressure of the mighty.
With a simple goodbye to my family, I became a son of exile.
I went through the mountain with worn out shoes, I cleaved to the stones with wounded hands.
I had to cross the sea, I walked on it.
In the middle of it, I was drinking death,
I was thirsty for arriving, for recovering the peace I had lost in my homeland.
I passed ten legal borders illegally, trying to find a law with my rights written in it.
The first law I met took my fingerprints, the second one dropped me into the cold of the street.
The third one judged me with a smirk and a rejection stamp. It left me faceless.
A new pain to carry like a load, one more on my lion's skin.¹
Lost in a sea of papers, under bridges, I was eating the hunger. I found a blanket of coldness and I slept in it.
Day after day, I was sinking into the label of refugee, a refugee without a refuge, without a name,
with my genuineness forgotten in my homeland and a reputation imposed by the medias.
There I stood escaping again from streets, cars, high-rises, well-dressed passersby going to work.
I fled them all, and found myself in the middle of the lawless jungle.
A jungle of my kind, with thousands like me. Scared faces, darkened hearts, darkened by a dark life.
I took refuge under a tent. The days and nights were succeeding one another.
A denied town. A lawless area covered with fences and barbed wires. No hope for justice.
Authorities were looting us sometimes, using seizure as a pretext.
Tears of nostalgia were running down my face, mixed with forced tears from teargas.
This time, no way to escape, my legs were fed up. My homeland was like a jungle, and here as well.

Where there are human beings, there are jungles, it's just the laws that change a bit. Each society has its inequalities. On one side, they eat flesh and bones to silence you; on the other, you are free to speak, but you are voiceless.
Over there, war and death; over here, being anonymous and a puppet of politics.
We fled injustice; here we are faceless.
Where is the jungle?

Notes

1. In Farsi, as in some other Oriental languages, "the lion's skin" refers to a physical force or toughness, accumulated through experience, against a difficulty.