

black haseesh candy with
the doors of yr body flung
open we twitched in spasms
muscular convulsions
heavenly epilepsy on the bed
in the hotel of the palms
prolonged orgasm
uncontrollable joy
of leaving the mind

Harold Norse.

[Note: souk = semi-covered market,
haseesh = hashish, cannabis resin]

A PHOTOGRAPH FROM CARCEMISH

I gaze at you now, my darling, my brother,
the pistol asleep in your young groin,
your lips pulled back in a mighty grin.
My little Hittite, after you there can be no other.

In your dark eyes, my darling, my brother,
The world was created from the waters of Chaos;
now black waves of tears
crash upon the beaches of my sleep
and drown my dreams forever.

T. E. Lawrence.

[Note: This poem was probably about a boy
called Dahoum, who was then around fourteen.
Lawrence "was devoted to the boy" and taught
him to take photographs.]

from MENAR ES-SENA : 'UPON THE CAFE DEEWAN...'

Upon the cafe deewan, gaily shawled
There lies a lad whose lips gleam sherbet-wet,
From time to time his olive face is palled
By the blue fume of a dull cigarette.
Beneath the red fez ebon tresses show,

He turns his head in indolent surprise,
And as he looks betwixt the lashes glow
The midnight beauties of his glorious eyes.

Montague Summers.

[Note: fez = arab hat]

from 'SI LE GRAIN NE MEURT'

Nothing suggested a cafe; the door was just like all the other doors; it was open, and we did not have to knock. [Oscar] Wilde was well known here I describe the place in Amyntas, for I often returned to it. Several old Arabs sat on mats smoking Kif, and barely moved as we took our places among them. And at first I did not understand what there was here to attract Wilde; but soon I saw, in the shadows by the fireplace, a caouadji, very young, preparing two cups of ginger tea for us - Wilde preferred this to coffee. I had let myself sink into the strange torpor of the place when, in the half open door, appeared the most marvellous boy. He stood for some moments, leaning on the lintel with an elbow, outlined against the darkness. He seemed uncertain whether or not to come in, and I was even afraid he might leave, but at a sign from Wilde he smiled, came towards us, and sat facing us on a stool a little lower than the mats on which we sat, cross-legged, Arab-style. He took a reed flute from his Tunisian waistcoat, and began to play, exquisitely. Wilde told me a little later that he was called Mohammed and that he 'belonged' to Bosie [Lord Alfred Douglas] [...] I admired the fineness of his fingers on the flute, the liveness of his adolescent body, the grace of his bare legs [...] Like the flowing of limpid water the sound of the flute made its way through an extraordinary silence, so that one forgot the time, the place, one's companion, and all the world's troubles. We sat, without moving, for what seemed an infinite time; and I would have stayed even longer if Wilde had not suddenly taken me by the arm, breaking the spell.

'Come,' he said.

We left, walked a little way down the passage, followed by our ugly guide, and I thought the evening was over; but at the first turning Wilde stopped, put his huge hand upon my shoulder - he was taller than me - and said in a low voice:

'Dear, would you like the little flute-player?'

What a dark passage that was! I thought my heart would stop. And what courage it took to answer, in a strangled voice, 'Yes.'

[...]

Later, every time I went in search of pleasure, I pursued

my memories of that night. [...] At La Rocque, the summer before last, I was afraid of going mad... Ah, what hell I lived through! And not a friend to whom I could speak, not a word of advice; I thought compromise impossible, and because I refused to surrender I was damned... But why should I recall those sad days? Does the memory explain that night's delirium? [...] My rapture was boundless - so much so that I cannot imagine it greater even if I had been in love. What is love, after all? Why shouldn't desire alone rule my heart? My pleasure was without second thoughts, without remorse. But how can I describe my delirium at holding in my naked arms that perfect, savage little brown body, eager, lascivious?

I spent a long time, after Mohammed had left me, in a state of trembling exaltation, and although I had reached the peak of pleasure five times with him, I re-lived my ecstasy again and again, and back at my room at the hotel prolonged the memories until dawn. At the first pale light I got up; and ran, yes really ran, in sandals, far beyond Mustapha; a kind of lightness of the body and soul did not leave me all day.

Andre Gide.

FRESCO OF BOYS AND BEACH

Noisy boys in the dry Arabian sun
dripping their shadows over rock and sand
invade the self-willed silence of the ear
this molten morning. A wear and tear
of surf and shouting leaves my hand
inert. I sit and watch them run

louder than gulls among breakers; slicker
than fish and water-scaled, high
bounding insteps flash; fine-haired
and unripe thighs have disappeared
under another ton of sea. The sky
disapproves with a parental flicker.

It is not negative but more of envy.
These profligates with so much to expend,
so little real to achieve, while one
with so many plans droops in the sun,
a rootless cactus, nothing to his hand
accomplished, drained of energy.

Louis Johnson.

[...] "even that convinced heterosexual Flaubert was finally able to unbend with a boy-prostitute in Egypt"

[Page 161 : White, Edmund. The Burning Library - writings on art, politics and sexuality 1969-1993. Chatto and Windus. London, 1994.]

Further reading:

Schild, Maarten.
The Irresistible Beauty of Boys; Middle Eastern attitudes about boy-love.
PAIDIKA - journal of paedophilia. Vol 1, No.3.

Schmitt, Arno, and Sofer, Jehoeda. (Eds.) Sexuality and Eroticism
Among Males in Moslem Societies. The Haworth Press, New York, 1992.
[Includes studies of Morocco, Syria, Iran, Turkey, and Israel.]

Next week - I shall endeavour to have some treats for girl-lovers,
I promise, having shamefully neglected girl poems over the past
few weeks !

ianthe@duende.demon.co.uk

Someone has asked me to add this anon. note on poetry to one of my postings.
I think it's worth reading:

Poetry is the imagination pressing back against the pressure of reality.
Such an operation does not intervene in that reality, but by offering
our desires the chance to recognise their predicaments, foreknow their
capacities, and rehearse some of their comebacks in all kinds of
venturesome ways, poetry can constitute a 'radical' intervention. It can
offer a response to an oppressive reality - a response which has a
liberating and verifying effect upon the individual spirit. And yet,
for the political activist, there is no point in imagining an order which
is comprehensive of events but which does nothing to produce new events.

However, the mere fact of placing a dissident counter-reality in the scales
may be an important political 'act' in itself - such a erotic counter-reality
gains weight because it is imagined within the full gravitational pull of the
actual, and therefore allows our desires to better hold their own and
balance out against the present oppressive historical situation.

Writing such a poetry may be a personal 'launch-pad' out of a lengthy
personal silence, alongside the rediscovery of past traditions of dissident
'speaking' 'unspeakable' desires; but it should also be possible
to go beyond and to have a poetry which is of active service to a fuller
programme of cultural-political-erotic realignment - and yet which can
still manage to operate with the fullest artistic integrity. Of course,
such a poetry must not simplify. Its projections and inventions must be
a match for the complex reality which surrounds it and out of which it is

generated.

ends.