

Gaariye Hadduu Tegay, Ma Goblamay Afkeenii

Bashir Goth, October 1, 2012

With the death of Mohamed Hashi Dhamac (Gaariye), the Somali people lost a great poet and literary custodian. Apart from the many masterpieces and deeply intellectual poetry that he left behind, Gaariye will be remembered in particular for his monumental efforts in founding and teaching the metrical structure of Somali poetry. He is to Somali poetry what Al Khalil ibn Ahmed Al Farahidi is to Arabic poetry.

I had the honour of meeting Gaariye in July 1998, when we both participated in a poetry evening at a fund-raising event for Amoud University in Abu Dhabi. One cannot find words to mourn the loss of such a literary giant, but silence at such a great calamity is not an option either, especially from a fellow poet.

Therefore, I wrote the following elegy to capture at least some glimpses of his memory as a poet. It will have to suffice to convey to the reader the impression I got from him during the almost four-hour awareness raising event and my social interaction with him the following day.

The poem will try to shed light on his versatile character and the unique style of his delivery, his strong presence, and his passionate and electrifying engagement with the audience during poetry recitations.

Gaariye used to appear to be in a fighting mood when reciting a poem. He used to muster all his physical, emotional, and intellectual power to interact with the audience. His sonorous voice that rose and fell with the intonation of the verse defied his petite physical appearance. He roared, electrified, and mesmerised the audience. As Ameri-

can sports writer Tom Smith is attributed to have said: “it is really very easy to be a writer—all you have to do is sit down at the typewriter and open a vein.” So if Gaariye opened a vein in writing his poems, he opened many veins in trying to pass his poetry’s ownership to his audience. His style reminded me of a line by the Arab Abbasid poet, Abu Tayyeb Al Mutanabi, who said:

ممص هب نم يتاملك تعسا و / يبدا على ايمع ال رظن يذلا ان

(I am the one whose poetry even the blind can see and can make even the deaf hear my words.)

My tribute poem, therefore, tries to capture this with the following lines:

Carraduu ka goohuu
Gucumaale aar iyo
Siduu yahay gudgude roob
Gurxanka iyo yeedhmada
Ka gariirin jiray iyo...

Although every poem in Gaariye’s anthology could constitute a masterpiece by itself, I can arguably say that the most important poems of all his verse will remain “Ergo” and “Hagarlaawe.” Just like Timacaade has been immortalized by his “Kaana siib, Kanna Saar” and his “Dugsi ma leh qabyaaladi” and Sayyid Mohamed Abdulle Hassan is remembered by his poem “Koofilow Adaa Jiitay oon Dunida Joo-gayne...,” remembering Gaariye’s name will also invoke the following lines in the memory of the Somali-speaking people:

Dharaar baa iman doonta-irsiqa laysku cidhiidhiyoo—wax la uunto la waayo.
Dharaar baa iman doonta mujrim—oogo madowoo—islamaa sheeganaayaa agablaay hambadaada—isa sii kaba raasho...
Hadeydaan i adeecinoo—ergedaan ahay maanta ka abaal ka dhacdaan—Ilaahay balankii ibtilaa dhici doonta
Dhulkay eyro ku fooftana Afrikaan madmadowiyo
Ajnabaa degi doona iyagaa talin doona...
Sidaan aaminsanahayna, Abkuu doono ha sheegtee
Wuxuun baa ehel ii ah, Dadka kaan af aqaano

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Ee si wax iila arkaaya, Ee ina midayso ujeedo.

—Cutubyadaas sare waa wada “Ergo”

Anigana hadhow iyo faallo, Halista inaan ka hafeeftay
Oo weliba hiifi iga gaadhay, Hagarlaawe, ii geli buuga...

“Hagarlaawe”

It was reported that when the Abbasid poet and philosopher, Abu Al Ala Al Marri, heard one of Al Mutanabi’s lines he admired it so much that he contended: if Al Mutanabi did not write any other poetry, that line would have been enough. The line was:

لزانم بولقلا يف لزانم اي كل

(O, my homesteads, you have homes in my heart)

I can also arguably say that if Gaariye did not write any other poetry but “Ergo” and “Hagarlaawe,” they would have by themselves constituted an entire anthology due to their profundity and literary richness.

In the following stanza of my tribute I try to sum up the depth, breadth, and intellectuality of Gaariye’s works:

Wallee gabay mug weyn iyo
Murti gaaxinteediyo
Ma la hoyday geeraar
Iyo garasho waaayeel

For non-Somali speakers, in the fourth stanza it mentions how he was a man of tenacity, an ebb-less river and a fearless hero under whose protection people felt safe. It describes his words as shooting out of his heart like arrows (Abwaan erayaduu gano) but turning into the sweet fruits of the Gob tree when they reach the ears of his audience. It marks how his words echo with the people and are quoted as maxims on every occasion. It shows how he was an ever-lit fire from which people took embers to warm up, a man of bounty whose generosity reached all the community, and a man of integrity (gob—sweet fruits) in supporting justice and thorns in the tyrant’s side (Ma ahaa gob iyo qodax).

In the 5th stanza the poem reassures Gaariye that a man like him—who travelled through the journey of life, both good days and bad days, who witnessed the days of independence (Gobaad) with its dreams

and promises and later saw war and hostilities and stood on the ruins of once prosperous cities (Guluf iyo colaad iyo, Guri ba'ay dul joogsaday...); a man who promoted peace and good neighbourliness; a man who rejected injustice and evil (his "Ergo" and "Hagarlaawe" poems come to mind); a man who left behind such enormous history – cannot be buried by death (Taarikh gu' weyn dhigay, geeridu ma duugtee).

The last stanza applauds Gaariye's command of the Somali language and his talent and skill in weaving verses with grace and beauty. It finds a befitting conclusion to bid him farewell in the words of a lyric (Tix baan kugu gunaanaday).

Abiidaba nin loo go'oo
Oo lagu galaashiyo
Geesigu ma waaree

Gaariye hadduu tegay
Tixdu gibil madaw iyo
Geybmaar ma xidhatoo
Ma goblamay afkeenii
Ma gaagaxday odhaahdii
Ma gallooftay heestii
Gegyigiyo dadkeenii
Carraduu ka goohoo
Gucumaale aariyo
Siduu yahay gudgude roob
Gurxanka iyo yeedhmada
Ka gariirin jiray iyo
Ma gammiintay ciiddii

Wallee gabay mug weyn iyo
Murti gaaxinteediyo
Ma la hoyday geeraar
Iyo garasho waaayeel

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Wallee geed adayg iyo
Durdur aan gudhayn iyo
Halyey lagu gabbada oon
Gibidhsiga aqoon iyo
Abwaan erayaduu gano
Goonyaha dalkoo idil
Laga goosan jirayoo
Goobtii la joogaba
Guubaabadiisiyo
Xikmaddiisa gaarka ah
Gaariye siduu yidhi
Gundhigga iyo sheekada
Lagu goyni jiray iyo
Gole laga dab qaatiyo
Godol reera deeqiyo
Ma ahaa gob iyo qodax

Gaarriyow gobaad iyo
Nin sidaada geeddiga
Guluf iyo colaad iyo
Guri ba'ay dul joogsaday
Oo gacal wanaagiyo
Nabad soo gardaadshoo
Ka gilgishay xumaanoo
Taariikh gu' weyn dhigay
Geeridu ma duugtee

Af Soomaaligaad galab
Iyo goor arooryaad
Sidii geenyo shaaximan
Goobayn taqaaniyo
Galladdii Ilaahay
Gaar kuugu deeqaan

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Kugu sii galbiyayoo
Tix baan kugu gunaanaday

Guullana firdawsiyo
Inuu goobta aakhiro
Guryo samo ku geeyaan
Duco kuugu guusoon
Gurmad kuugu soo diray

Source: <http://hanua.blogspot.com/>.