

SONG TO SALEH

I jump out of the desert bus
into a wilderness; scrubby wasteland
at the side of the twisting road

I begin to walk.
Saleh follows.
I watch my caution,

but anyway slow my pace.
I am careful of the way,
the way of war.

He guides me along a ledge
through a ravine
carved between high rock.

We look over the precipice.
Thirst cuts my mouth.
My skin cracks.

We scramble deeper into dust,
towards Palms
sheltering a pool.

He pulls back the giant leaves.
Sun streams.
We crouch like cats.

Dip and dangle our legs into cool.
He fills his hands. I drink.
We sit for hours in the pale green.

The fire sun
brandishes heat, then slows,
as time melts into stone.

Gradually the moon creeps silver
into hollow craters,
turning spider shadows white.

I draw idly into dust,
watching the moon
drape shadows.

I plunge
into the wasteland
and swim the path.

He moves towards me.
For a moment he leaves his friends.
He pulls closer,

strokes away my tears,
traces my body with his fingers.
Kisses away my fears.

I turn back
to the high Jerusalem hills.
Wind my way up into chasms.

