

AN INVITATION TO POETRY

Jawdat R. Haydar: The Romantic and Universal Poet

He's the poet from Baalbek who wrote in the language of Shakespeare, accessible verses that sound like music.



It has been a decade since our great poet Jawdat R. Haydar has gone at the age of one hundred and one. A long life caught with many tumultuous personal and regional events that left their prints on his spirit.

He's the poet who was born in Baalbek in 1905. At the age of eight he spoke English with English soldiers posted there. He was sensitive to the beauty of his hometown, the land and the temples: "Take yourself charioted to the city/Of the gods, a temple built on the plain; /Upheld by the girders of Time to remain/A unique structure of eternal fame". Then exile sent him to Turkey and years later his pursuit for education took him to France and USA. He spent years watching and listening to the world hence his publications *Voices*, *Echoes* and *Shadows*. When long years had passed by, Jawdat Haydar became proud about his age "...old age should be revered without despair/having had a natural touch of grace."

We live today with the phone glued to our hand, constantly connected in

a social network that is present only on a lit screen. Our life would almost be senseless if we don't surrender to different arts to see beauty in everything and everywhere. Poetry is a "literary art" where the words bring out imageries and opinions. "...the poet might be the medium between nature and the world" says Jawdat Haydar. It's with words then that he built verses and "the process is so difficult that one poem can sometimes take years to complete" he wrote. Poetry is not only a matter of inspiration then but a "craft" as author John Munro says on the poet's impeccable English writing.

The beauty of his lyricism was a mold in which he cast his feeling, opinions and concerns about Lebanon, the world and everything. He was a Romantic poet who questioned real modern problems. On Pollution he wrote: "... Look at the mountains of fume muffling the sky, /Spreading everywhere the quietus to make / Of all the life on earth the shrivel and die; /That's the truth, why should we call the truth a fake." He's "the messenger of peace" in "a world of despair" and invites people to love and forget their hate. He refused to give up and the many

JOHN MUNRO

JAWDAT R. HAYDAR: THE VOICE FROM BAALBEK



The book signing was on 26 May 2016

political movements he witnessed led him to run as independent for a seat in the Lebanese parliament. Yet, he was awarded for his several humanitarian works.

During his many life journeys, Jawdat Haydar always returned to Baalbek where he finally retired. He spent his time writing poetry and fulfilling his desire of farming the land. "I still farm my land to get the fresh smell of the earth", he wrote. In 2006, the "ship" he long waited for came on December 4th and took him to his "new home in the sky" (Words of the poet).

www.jawdathaydar.org

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