

Fady Joudah
My Name Tastes To Me Of Sand

My name tastes to me of sand, sand

piles at the bottom
of a newborn river
into truths I dream up and sorrows I overcome

I taste people on my tongue

my name grainy and like a forged trunk
it branches on the grid roads of the world

I sing a mawwaal and yearn
I sing a mawwaal and bind
humankind to the fields of my country

My name ran out of the days of love

My name ran out of the days when love
was by my side and now I live

to extinguish a star I desire to see
and in the desire my name tastes to me
of fado

'Meu Nome Sabe-me a Areia' by Vasco de Lima Couto

Fado is a vernacular, nineteenth-century, urban tradition. Or to put it another way, it's the street- and bar-song of Lisbon; a Portuguese *cante jondo* of melancholia, love and loss. Now Mimi Khalvati is editing, for the Gulbenkian Foundation, translations by eighteen British and American poets of these startling verses. *Saudade: An anthology of Fado poetry*, ed. Mimi Khalvati, (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, £8.50, ISBN 9781903080085, Feb 2010).

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