

instinctively shut off the engine. Once again, the spotlight shone directly on the skiff, this time long enough for us to see each other's faces and to surprise one another with our hands up in the air. We discovered that there were two young girls on board. Thwarted in our attempt. The officers' voices could be heard telling the skipper to bring the patrol boat alongside the skiff for them to board our craft. Something must have run amuck in Ahmed's mind when he heard the Civil Guardsmen's orders, because he suddenly grabbed onto the engine control and stepped on the gas so fast that he threw us all down in our tracks. Back in the shelter of darkness, the skiff made a desperate break for the coast. It was all for nothing.

The repeated shots, probably fired into the air as a warning, now sounded louder as they echoed off the rocks. The strain of making a getaway, the dire need of making it to the nearby coast, deafened our ears to the shots. The blackness of the cliffs, outlined against the yellowish blue of the sky, was moving toward us while the bursts of cannon fire darted all around us, desperately exploring the water. Without being able to see us, the patrol boat crew was chasing in hot pursuit. We could hear the shots being fired in the air and the two high-powered engines of their boat. We were getting a close-up view of its one crazed, socketless eye. Several times, that enraged beast was about to run us over while one of its crew fired shots and shouted.

Stop, you bastard! You're going to kill 'em all!

Other times, they managed to pull up alongside the skiff, but when one of the officers, gun in hand, was all set to jump on board, Ahmed would veer, and we would go zigzagging off into the night. Our skipper played cat and mouse long enough to near the coast. Savvy Ahmed knew that as of a certain point the patrol boat would have to give up the chase for fear of running aground. The spotlight on their tower stayed fixed on us until we made it to the rocks. We all jumped frantically off the skiff and onto the steep slope, each one grabbing the first bag of clothes to be found at his feet. Drenched, we were stumbling into one another, banging our shins on the rocks, some bags splitting open like rag dolls leaving a trail of stuffing behind in the night. But we had made it to dry land.



FLUIDS AND FLOWS

MANUEL G. VELARDE

Fluids, swirling, whirling.... the stuff that dreams, poetry, life, evolution, beauty and its waning — even horror — are made of. Fluids and swirling, whirling, infinitely flexible, slow, fast, short, microscopic, long or incommensurable.

Water, air, clouds — cumulus, stratus, nimbus, cirrus clouds... Whirling, swirling, microworld (superfluids), macroflows (tornadoes, hurricanes, galaxies in the infinite) almost infinitely expandable.

Fluids, the driving and master of nature, capable of allowing some solids to float and of pulling others under.

Rasping fluids for spermatozoids, protozoa and pollen; inertial, uplifting fluids for man, sharks and dolphins.

Whirling, swirling, spirals, jets, drops.... infinite bonds, symbols of life. Waves, ripples, bores, tsunami, ... symbols of life as well as of horror.

Water everywhere. We are almost made only of water. An elephant is almost three-fourths water; an earthworm, eighty percent; a jellyfish, ninety; a young human body, forty; an old one, three-fourths although wizened.... and our brains, eighty percent. This planet is over seventy percent water, and the atmosphere and that trailing behind is fluid almost ad infinitum. A cactus hardly half a meter tall can grow down several meters below the desert surface to trap imperceptible moisture and thus live almost eternally.

Water, whose boiling point changes from valleys to mountain tops. Capable of boiling, freezing and evaporating all at the same time, or of expanding and weighing less when frozen. From freezing to evaporating, from boiling to cooling. An extremely poor heat conductor, and yet a perfect heat-transporting fluid.

Water, air.... we are machines whose fluid functions, of air, of blood and of other waters are many: jets, membranes, filters, force and discharge pumps or dual-purpose ones, faucets ...

Fluids which are shapeless, yet which are capable of taking on infinite forms. Liquids, water, neither an infinitely imperfect gas nor a perfect solid crystal. Liquids, imperfect fluids, hybrids and yet endlessly evolving, creating. Without any error, without any defect, evolution would not have taken place, new species as the advantage of having put an error to good use. Mankind's survival would have been impossible without the migratory flow, without the interbreeding currents.... without the unorthodox displeasure having been taken in the apparently unquestionable as perfect.

Fluids, the symbol of adventure, of the unforeseeable, of turbulence, of chaos.... and yet the underlying flow of creation. Without fluids, a void.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN: WATER TO COMPRISE THE CORE OF ALL FUTURE CONFLICTS

BY SAMI NAÏR

In the mid-seventies, warning of the dangers which were lying in wait for the Mediterranean would have generally been taken as being alarmist and absurd. Today, this comprises a commitment and a duty. Environmental disaster is not only a serious threat which is looming over this region, but a progressively more well-founded probability. The degradation of the seas is quickening in pace, and pollution along coastlines has become more obvious since then. One out of every six oil tankers in the world sails the