

I came here to watch a play, or so I thought.

It made my face ache  
But only my face

I was convinced that I was dancing,  
tapping my feet,  
Screaming, laughing and weeping  
My toes went numb  
my hands, asleep

I was moved,  
silently sitting still  
in a crowd of faceless heads  
who  
"FOR ONE NIGHT AND ONE NIGHT ONLY!"

wanted to dissolve into the underdog of all characters:

The Audience  
carefully orchestrated  
by The Theatre herself  
She confused any one of us  
for the other

Even you

And the tooth-aching sound you make  
quarrelling the un-popped corn kernels in your mouth  
And the sound of your dull and tasteless candy

Silently undressing

Even then  
She needs you  
but She doesn't see you

We enter Her world  
and practiced to perfection;  
it repeats  
as She feeds  
on the predictable crowd

She transports us,

traps us  
(momentarily)

Suddenly it was all I could see

She was so effortlessly manipulative  
She did it all!

The dancers (repulsive as they were)  
moved only to seduce each other

The sets,

moving and changing,  
treating time like a fresh tub of playdough

*She* mercilessly toyed with our emotions  
named Her price and made us wait in line  
to consume Her  
while She appears to have consumed us

*She* swallowed us whole then threw us all out the back door

Where we all suddenly could see  
one another,  
slowly walking out

resuscitating the limbs that we left to die

With our eyes half closed  
looking at each other as if we were all butt naked  
excited about what we just witnessed

but aware and possibly ashamed

realizing

that we do not belong to the play  
and that the play does not belong to us

It was hypnotic, but it was not special  
(not to *Her* at least)

As for me, I knew  
that my pupils would retract

at the sight of the street lights

that the salty popcorn residue

would make me thirsty and my lips dry

Soon,  
I'd forget how She made me feel

Like the play never was  
and would never be again.

By Nour el Saleh