

SELIN SOGUTLUGIL/
KANATLARIM ASKTANDI
BOOK RELEASE INTERVIEW
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Having stepped into the world of literature with a high sales speed that can be considered successful within the borders of Turkey with her Poetry book called « Kanatlarım Asktandı/ My wings were from Love », published by Alfa Publishing Group/ Mona Kitap, Author Selin Söğütlügil tells us about her joyful journey...

In the synopsis of your book, you underline that love is hidden in every moment of "Life"... This is an artful definition... Is there a difference between "The Art of Life" and "The Art of Living" for you? And if there is, where does love find its place between these definitions?
The biggest paradigm of life is caused by the fact that it is a prize that we are awarded... Life is a splendid present for us. And, I think, life is actually the art of living it. Like F. Nietzsche said; "We want to be the poets of our lives. And we need one thing for this; to shape our personalities; which is a big and rare art." But is this impossible? Absolutely not!... Life's paradigm is to reach this poet within that award, which is ourselves... An art with a particular authenticity!...The art of living that is hidden in Foucault's Asceticism (self-practice, self-development practice), that he underlines with an extraordinary originality on the basis of his self-ethics; in other words, "Tekhne Tou Biou" is this! What reaches our times from Greek/Ancient Rome is completing the life with individual freedoms and self-control in joy, pleasure, living every single moment and creating nice memories and experiences to pass down to future generations. Here, freedom is the ontological condition of our existence. The more we are pure and free in the moral sense, the more we move away from moral asceticism, from masks, from superficial recipes dictated by imperious bodies, turn towards our real individuality and give original shapes to our personalities, the bigger poets we become for our own lives. The art of living is actually a marvelous art of existence and its formula is to create ourselves with care and love while destroying the stereotypes that appear in front of us as templates. This is difficult... Because there is always a search in the alchemy of our existence that exist in that life, which is the search of belonging! This lasts for a lifetime. Belonging is the reflection of the basic protection instinct. Each individual creates different belonging cultures in his or her own inner world and lives there... But there is a type of belonging that stands on everything in flames. It is called "Love"... And belonging to love requires a lot of courage!
The word "courage" comes from Latin. It is derived from the word "Coeur", which means "heart". Its actual meaning is to shout out the story of who you are with all your heart. Belonging to love is only possible with this big heart, with this "courage". Its story lies within its art, you cannot reborn without being reduced to ashes for love. You first disappear with courage and then you reborn with all your freedom. This is the biggest revolution! Because love is hidden in every moment of life and the biggest love stories start between these moments like unique revolutions... This only real revolutionary art for me is life, to live with courage and love.

You are the closest blood inheritant by your great grand uncle the founder of Turkish Reublic;

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk...but we can say that you carefully talk about it. Is this a choice?

Yes... A clear choice... What remain in life are actions; as being the closest relative of a great leader that abolished sultanate, monarchical absolute demagoguery, I prefer to live and maintain this great honor not only in words, but with concrete actions, behaviors and the steps I take in my life. So I love and choose to talk in my actions. According to my patterns and beliefs as a Turkish woman; our martyrs that sacrificed their lives for our motherland in Anatolia, our soldiers that protect their territories on borders, our writers, illustrators and philosophers who love their country and their people, our scientists, entrepreneurs, our poets who plant love and courage on our lands and our souls, our women who blossom like ever blooming roses, our children, all moral sympathizers of our republic are part of Mustafa Kemal's soul and blood. Then, aren't we all his affinities? We are all children of Mustafa Kemal!

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Dear Söğütlügil, birds and bird wings are your biggest symbols... Does this have different meanings in your life? Can you tell us a bit, why birds, and why did you name your book after them?

Birds! Because they are the representatives of the celestial world. Celestial world is that unique esthetic that exists, it is independent and it is an inaccessible treasure.. What is inaccessible is mysterious... This mystery triggers the exciting feeling of discovery in human existence. And birds are the "winged gods" of this world. Those beautiful birds that challenge gravity and radiate love and hope whenever they spread their wings... There is a part in Mesnevi. Mevlana says the following there (section 870): "Take out your wings, become a bird! And fly towards the sky; if your heart is filled with real love, you are the bird of heaven..." Whether it is heart or language, that priceless treasure in a creature's chest, that ocean, that unique sky is so supreme and so deep, as long as the creature reaches the crystal meaning of love that it hides inside.

In esoteric beliefs, the heart, full of such a pure light, spreads and reflects that love around the universe with its wing-shaped light auras. Just like our great Khorasan (Khorasan means the place where sun and light are born) saints undertaking the job of showing the right way in Anatolia, our Anatolian saints whose souls are filled with heavenly lights, Hacı Bektaş Veli, Mevlana, Tebrizi and Yunus Emre said, everything in life is actually this light, which means love and heart are home to love and it is so deep, it has wings in love... And me, I couldn't have imagined the title and content of my book differently since it defines it in the best way. That's why I called it "My wings were from Love"...

The biggest love stories start between these moments like unique revolutions...

In one of your pages you say "Hold my hand, come next to me, let's all remain children". How does Selin Sogutlugil protect the child inside her?

The mystic union experience in human creation is the form of the state of transcendence that existence will show in the future combined with love, just like Jung and Erich Fromm underlines. Being a child means finding the dynamism of this pure life satisfaction, which is only concentrated with love, within the enthusiastic relationship with oneself. Keeping the child inside alive is to realize love; not with objects but by feeling the pure essence of our existence without leaving our own identity to any earthly power, without showing inability to any outer stimulus... This

state of existence clearly underlines the same transcendence both in Islamic Mysticism, in Kaballah and Buddhism. The child and love inside are so important for me. In one sense this is a romantic definition of life... Because I firmly believe that "brilliance is in the heart!" Remaining child is a courageous virtue ! It is the state of resistance against the taboos, powers, sanctions, stimuluses that limit us from the inside; it is freedom, it is not surrendering, it is to comprehend life only with enthusiasm and love without being restrained, to live, to create, only to love and so to be happy. If this child is living inside you, you feel like you touch life all alive in every breath... That's why we should hold hands, stand together, leave everything behind and remain as pure as children... We should honor our feelings, our heart has its own authentic brain. Because we actually all have our brilliance hidden in our hearts... And this is called love.

Sport has an important place in your life... You participate and run in marathons all around the world. What other sports are you interested in? It is an amazing feeling to make sports a part of your life. Actually running is the oldest action of human kind since its creation. It is within us... Besides athletics, I love and practice swimming, archery, ski and sailing. I got to know sailing when I was 4 years old by my father. And I can say that my love for the sea enhanced that. But another activity to which I am attached with passion, which raises my soul is archery... My relationship with the arc and bow started in England and turned into an extraordinary love. It is the same simplicity that I experience with the pen and paper while writing... It has a transparent texture where I can express myself and call it a defiance. All the area is yours, and you define your targets. You experience the effort of exceeding yourself with time... Archery is one of the most important parts of our culture. Together with equitation, they are the symbols of physic culture in ancient Turkish tribes.

You also take part in many charity activities and you participate in some marathon runs for charity organizations. What are those activities? We also learned that you will be taking part in one of the most challenging marathons of the world in May 2017; The Great Wall of China Marathon. We would like to hear about it from you...

This year I was deeply impressed by the Renewal Charity Campaign organized by Şişli Etfal Hospital Pediatric Oncology Center, which was turned into an amazing project by "KAYD/ Life Without Cancer Organization". I am very happy to contribute to this campaign as part of Athlete Angels. The biggest reflection of real love in the universe is unconditional help. Meaningful actions that we realize without expectation for each other both allow us to share the love inside us and to enhance it which is the single and dissociated definition of life. This energy is a great power, it overcomes all problems, it cures all creatures, it germinates all lives... This is metaphysical massive momentum that we introduce to life by sharing. That's why we should unite hand to hand, heart to heart. Great Wall of China Marathon already turned into a big excitement for me; it has a very different nature. I want to plant the flags of Turkey and Life Without Cancer Organization on the Great Wall. It is one of the world's three most different and iconic marathons. The other two are Polar Circle Marathon and Bagan Temple Marathon that takes place in Myanmar... May the roads we run for love never end. Here, I would like to invite our beloved readers to support our campaign.

You study ;your Master's degree in England in Film&Media&Art Production both for screen and theater. Do you consider running these projects

simultaneously with your literary works? And, how important is theater for you, which is a bit forgotten in the age of technology?

I keep working intensively in both platforms with ongoing learning. I am very happy about it and I understand that I can remain as a student for a lifetime and I should! Each project is like another thrill, another journey.

I think the ability to create is that amazing pleasure at the edge of our existence that life proposes to us. The direct link between creation and individuality and the sense of tragedy pulls human beings into creative processes. One can have a grasp of his or her own conscience while creating and discovers it once again.

In existentialist psychiatrist Rollo May's words, one first becomes unconscious; beyond losing oneself, this state of unconsciousness is becoming one with ourselves that appears afterwards. I think creating is a great energy, an energy that turns into art with a conscious drive... We can say that the art that we mentioned in the first question of our conversation is both very natural and equally original with this energy and the soul that creates it. When it comes to theater's big and particular place in my heart, I cannot put it into words! For me theater is "the Zeus of all Arts". It is the biggest of all arts that offers us all the meaning of life in a vital and naturalist way; that takes life from its cultural, atmospheric layers and reaches to metaphoric zeniths in a magical realization and that includes us in every moment of this journey while doing this. We find the nesting of "Animus and Anima" in Jung's existential definition in the "in Situ" nature of the extraordinary relation between the actor and his role in theater... Theater has been the biggest power that triggers my love for literature since my childhood. Such that, the first piece that I watched and I was very impressed of was Rhinoceros from Ionesco... My mother's love for arts and theater carried us to theater halls once or twice a month since very early ages. I believe that the fact of living in the age of technology will contribute to theater's magic. There is a very meaningful definition in Irish Ulster Saga, which is one of the oldest sagas of the world. "Curadmir", which means the merit of the champion... In my way of seeing art, consider theater as "Curadmir of Arts". Of course the magic of existentialism never leaves me alone in that! Berthold Brecht's picturesque approach, S. Beckett and Chekov are the genres that impress me the most. Long live theater, long live art.

As an artist who reads a lot, when it comes to literature, is there a particular theme that impresses you the most? It is always wondered what impresses a writer, what is she influenced of when it comes to other literature works?

For me it is absolutely the feeling of tristesse; sadness&blues. Among all literal works that I read, I discovered that the element that connects me recklessly to pages in time is first of all this feeling of blues. This feeling wraps itself up in different colors from one story to another, finds its place as careful reflection of that writer's personality, experiences, perception of life combined with reader's inner understanding just like the shades mixed on a painting canvas. Then, what are those colors?

Love smelling blues of Marquez, Llosa, Neruda and Mistral are surely rather dark red. Pushkin's, Dostoyevsky's, Proust's, Joyce's and Orhan Pamuk's blues unites with the place and landscape, takes wings towards the heights and emerges and suddenly enters into one's heart like a bird and becomes a blurry grey color. Goethe's description of sadness is as enthusiastic, naïve and romantic as Prometheus covers his hands in thorns. I believe his color should be dark pink, which also reflects the

eastern mysticism that he admires; discrete and passionate... Nietzsche's, Poe's and Kafka's sadness are covered in psychic, mad, endless textures, fill all our cells with the deserted black of a dark night just like a never ending well that one cannot get out of. While the blues of Borges, Stendhal and Flaubert have accented pastel shades, it becomes earth brown with Yahya Kemal, Nazim Hikmet and Yasar Kemal, reminding me of my homeland and turns into small green sprigs that turn green on that land in each longing that I dedicate to it. A. Rand's, Murakami's and Nabokov's blues flow inside you with a different transparency without making you realize and leaves your body with a different irony again; their blues have no color, they don't burn you inside. In Tanpinar's works sadness embraces all feelings, slowly melts inside them. It turns into a happy motion and shines in a sunny yellow that maintains its character every season.

Emily Dickenson's, Hemingway's, Steinback's sadness is all blue, volatile like pieces of feather spreading in the air, as beautiful and light as the impressive color of the sky. It creates a sense of hollowness in people and then satisfies them with the same feeling.

Then why "tristesse/sadness/blues"?

Because blues is love's impromptu habita. Blues is a must for our nature, our art of living. It is the skeleton of the nostalgia that symbolizes the union of loneliness and life experience... Please do not get these statements wrong, my descriptions are only with literate purposes... Because in literature, blues has a nature that feeds the reader by creating a controversy axis with happiness and leaves deep traces and it is as strong as love.

Finally, you are leading a life between England and Turkey. As an activist, what kind of a future you foresee for Turkey when you look from England?

We know that there are two interlaced very important factors that keep the world turning since primitive ages. One of these is religion or in other words belief system and the other is politics or in other words the power system. And the concept of state is macro human where these two elements are gathered together with Platon's definition. Here, the most important criteria for both of these is information. These two systems are inseparable with an organic link. One defines society, the individual, and the other is speech, voice and result that grasps the whole. Both of them are very important and very dangerous. In all state systems that are manipulated with information, the best achievement is stability. Then both human and macro human should be well informed. Yes, there is no land without problems and you cannot talk about a completely sterilized environment in any country. But fundamentally, the presence of fractures and leakages in the life skeleton mainly causes small provocations, cleavages to lead to bigger events that may harm the basis of life stability. Here, governors' knowledge and ability to comprehensively get to know their region and the world is important. Because they are the ones that take the right manipulative steps between systems. Geopolitically, Turkey has an important power in the world with both its rich and mature history and with its promising young population that is its biggest capital. This was neglected during the EU integration processes. I will not consider union, effort, sacrifice and sudden changes; this is a very long subject. However, the state and governments should use their right of authority with an absolutely healthy auto-critic system without forgetting non-oppressive common sense and knowledge, without tending to dictate, ignoring their own interests, or they will disappear by pulling their country into a big socio-political

chaos. A big part of the chaos that is now experienced in Turkey can only be described with these issues. As individuals, we would like to live freely and peacefully in a democratic country. This is the basic right of life that every individual brings along with his or her existence. And we elect governors that will realize this for us. We also have the right to change the ones that do not do so. The more we are informed, the more conscious citizens we become. Because the biggest power that challenges wrong systems is individuals' desire to define their right to freedom. Rousseau says that miracles were all realized by free people in order to protect themselves from oppression. Proudhon's "Property is theft" statement actually defines this socio-political identity of individual. If we consider this which is sadly a misinterpreted philosophy in our country, the individual that wants to live in a humanly way should be someone conscious and contentious that does not surrender to paradigms, that is informed but does realized this information not only by thinking, but also by acting, challenges all oppressive properties and authorities and is not influenced by the bossiness of politics. The right of property only belongs to individuals and state mechanism is responsible of protecting this right, not of possessing it. A well governed country is created if smart and sensible citizens elect leaders that can govern by using the information with common sense, without confusing these two main systems, without making discrimination within its people, knowing that his leadership and managing titles do not have a symbiotic relation with his own character, truly informed about his country and the world, able to create hard-line infrastructures in diplomatic relations and most importantly, able to create a social endurance mechanism between individuals in the society, which can also be called a union of opinion or acceptance of existence. In art, creativity does not need to be tested with life but politics is not like that, says Chomsky. It is obliged to be approved by life, otherwise it becomes nothing and the intellectual quality of politics led in countries depends on the balance between power and opposition. Here and happily; we once again face information and informed people. The more we feed ourselves with information, the more we become an intellectual global activist, the more we become acting creatures, citizens and electors that shape their future with their own heart and actions besides being ideological militants, and so we elect "philosopher kings" with Platon's words, which means virtuous, conscious, high-souled, visionary, fair and correct statesmen. We come only once to life, we hold everything in our hands from arts to politics, from terror to peace; they are all linked with the power of existence; it is enough not to wait for others to take a step in order to live in a beautiful world. Let's achieve this by ourselves, we exceedingly have this power... Just like activist writer June Jordan says; "Actually, what we searching for in every dimension of life is ourselves."