The heart of Oujda is of stone,
Its hands a volcano and a wind,
And has no time for speech.

Here life passed me by
Here it passed
Leaving me in your weary arms
Striking the gates of silence,
O city of death,
Hoping that you open a door [to dialogue
So can you spare some time [for speech?

A MINUTE’S SPEECH
TO OUJDA

إلى مدينة وحدة
قلب "وحدة" من حجر
و يداها في عんですけど و ريح
و ليس لديها منيب للكلام...

من هنا مررت علي الحياة،
من هنا مررت
و تركي
في حضرك النعيم،
با مدينة الموت،
أطراف أبواب الصمت،
لعائك
تضنين بابا للحوار
فهل لديك منيب للكلام؟

** **
Your silence is exhausting
The choke became heavier
The bridge – to you – longer
So may I leave
Or can you spare
Some time
For speech?

You are a vertigo
With neither beginning
Nor end.
Come on stop a little while
I have a lot to say to you:
Air is all dust here
And life in you is like catching a cold.
So, could the world change tomorrow?
Could silence and gloom
vanish?
**  **

you are a gate
opening onto another gate

A wall . . . a wall . . .
And a wall,
And I have for years
Been searching inside you
For a place
and for speech …

2000, Touria Majdouline
From: *al-Mut’aboon (The weary)*
Publisher: Dar al-Jussor, Oujda
Translation: 2004, Abdellah Benlamine and Norddine Zouitni

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¹ Poetisa marroquina.