

When he reached the edge of Haifa, approaching by car along the Jerusalem road, Said S. had the sensation that something was binding his tongue, compelling him to keep silent, and he felt grief well up inside of him. For one moment he was tempted to turn back, and without even looking at her he knew that his wife had begun to cry silently. Then suddenly came the sound of the sea, exactly the way it used to be. Oh no, the memory did not return to him little by little. Instead, it rained down inside his head the way a stone wall collapses, the stones piling up, one upon another. The incidents and the events came to him suddenly and began to pile up and fill his entire being. He told himself that Safiyya, his wife, felt exactly the same, and that was why she was crying. Ever since he left Ramallah that morning he had not stopped talking, nor had she. Beneath his gaze, the Golan Heights sped by through the windshield, and the heat was unbearable. He felt his forehead catch fire, exactly like the burning asphalt beneath the car's wheels, while above him the sun, the terrible June sun, spilled the tar of its anger upon the earth. All along the way he talked and talked and talked. He spoke to his wife about everything—about the war and about the 1948, 1967