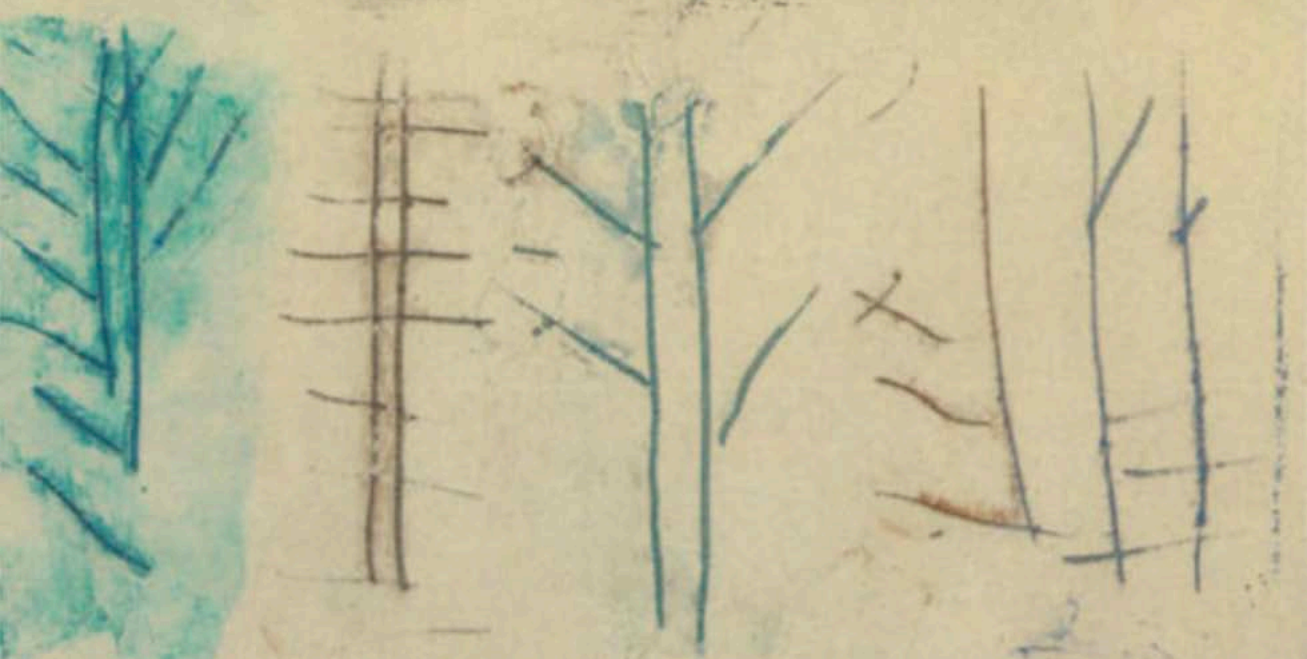




LES ENLUMINURES
DE
AMINE EL BACHA



Banque Audi

He is by nature an intensely withdrawn person — guarded, wary of any intrusion into his own private inner world. A warm smile shyly concealed, behind a salt and pepper beard. His sometimes quizzical regard softened by spectacles that, paradoxically, are like windows giving us a glimpse of a powerful life force, a profound desire to drink in everything his eyes behold.

Imagine our man, one fine morning, engaged in what Baudelaire called “the universal analogy of simple being”, living out one of those moments which subtly give sense to life. Picture him walking into his local bank, after ambling through streets alive with the scent, sights and chant of prayers — the streets running from his rooftop studio to the main thoroughfares of West Beirut.

What is he looking for, this tireless sampler of city delights, this lover of delicate flavours and obscure forms? He is seeking (and has the gall to find it) in each everyday object, in each passing feeling (even if it offends at time) a hidden joy or even the secret eroticism they sometimes contain. But inside a bank, you may well ask? Yes, there too, or wherever, he remains faithful to the prerogative of a true artist — the right, nay, the duty, to overturn this established order of things, to show us for the good of our conscience that every coin has its reverse side (especially the one pinned to our own chest).

Did I say overturn? Judge for yourself! Because without waiting his turn at a counter he simply helps himself, picking up whatever comes to hand — brochures, prospectuses, deposit slips, folders... all the things that a bank lays out for its clients and which they rarely keep. In fact, a customer who battles his way to the book racks does so only if his curiosity has been fed by a desire to consult rows of figures or... if the colour of a brochure, its layout or format have caught his eye.

“See how by breathing life into what is totally flat and inert, a statement of amalgamated short term credits becomes a victorious sun, shareholder equity will shower you with frivolous sensations, discount rates will radiate brilliant promise, and the most innocuous photo will become alive, vibrant with happiness. From a chaotic mass of figures, I will create a musical score, where strange birds gently make fun of our overweened reasoning. Indeed, with flowing unconstrained mood, I will make every last piece of these oh-so

useful papers, the source of all gratuitousness". And without further to-do, stripped of all preconception, there he is, this master of the aquarelle, armed with a treasure trove of documents, ready to take the plunge... deep into the adventure of transforming them into living art, into watercolors. He galvanises the commonplace by adding a magic bird, bringing highlights to a coldly humourless portrait so that it becomes a symbol of all the world's spectacles. He breaks up a sequence of accounts, by detaching their final figures and replacing them with a plethora of arabesques, occasionally adding a window to a featureless page so that it, too, is transmuted by the lyric fire of fiction. He takes the coldly disciplined columns of figures and by simply removing several of their number, recycles them into a veritable fountain of color the like of which has never been seen, that is until you take a look at what he has done to the heavenly vault of an "annual report", now transfigured into a wonderland of sparkling signs, a carousel of colors, jostling each other for a plack in the furrow of the artist's brush strokes.

With Amin El Bacha, form becomes gusts of laughter, carved out of the living body, his graphics a gesture of love, devoid of all reticence or reproach, as translucid as the light it espouses. Forms without artifice, opening the way to his ultimate, pluralistic, eclectic and tolerant goal, embracing everything of value. It is totally honest self affirmation, drawing its energy and inspiration in full innocence, freed of those constraints placed in his way by God knows what guilt, and with the extraordinary courage that only a profound contentment with one's own existence can engender. Thanks to Amin El Bacha, colors become libertine, voluptuous, generous. An exciting odyssey, because his talent washes over us, carrying us away almost by accident, without our noticing it, making us see ourselves as we really are. And if I use here the word accidental it is a reflection of what Amin El Bacha himself thinks about painting and its place in the great canvas of life — an accident being the antithesis of idealizing a subject or of compensatory sublimation. No, what he's really driving home to us is that painting is none other than pure happening, where every atom of the giant life force is forged in the great crucible, a powerful potion for our deepest fears. The most minute slash, the tiniest figure or simplest of symbols tells us about the great eros of creation, there where the battle is fought out between the puritan censorship of lifeless men. The sap flows, once more inseminating this "forest of symbols" with all its power. The heart is free to sing, at precisely the point where it would normally have been required to keep quiet. Desire wells again between bodies made joyful, become bold and audacious. The whole world, and painting in particular, now have their place. They can, free of all artifice, sing in praise of the great female principle, the eternal lover which none may embrace without being burned.

Is it not an honor to be taught by painting that paradox is a woman, just

as contradiction is male? That the essence of art is beyond all doubt an invitation to the spirit to take strength from its very breath, from the well of all that is natural, to take perverse reality and, in a gale of subversive laughter, celebrate this jubilant union?

Yes, subversion... and not mockery, is the theme that will sparkle from the moment you open this book. Order, disorder, higgledy piggledy, all is there. Seriousness gives up the ghost (if it ever had life). Comedy is king. The guests are at the banquet table... They're all bank executives, posing before the feast begins. Are they any worse off? Absolutely not. They will go through life as if it were itself a brimming feast, offering the indescribable pleasure of dreaming, even at the most painful moments of terminal illness, or a difficult convalescence.

This is the flesh and substance of Amin El Bacha's painting. Just think of what inner strength, what force of feeling it took to traverse a hideous war, without losing his stubborn determination which drew its inspiration from an invisible fountainhead. Letting him paint doves, golden suns, landscapes, nudes, apples, mountain paths, portraits of free men and the eternal vista of the ocean. Think a moment about this rare courage, of this lesson in life's qualities, so extraordinarily unique that it overturns our deepest-seated convictions. "You take pleasure in the destruction of human bodies, you enjoy your crimes — so I will not dispute your pleasure in death! It is already present in nature and it would be tragic of me, I who know the true meaning of passion, to make it a bone of contention between us. Now you may better understand that nature is a chasm of paradox, an abyss of contradictory passions and that under the mantle of pleasure there are others which, on the contrary, help with creation and growth. Even in the headiest moments of this life experience, I will never stop proclaiming my belief that its splendors resolutely defy death, holding we merchants of destruction at bay". The proof, I believe, lies in certain glorious necessities that life provides and which the present work so brilliantly portrays. For example, look at this female musician who, defying convention, spreads her legs to hold and press against her body a cello, drawing it into her intimacy and giving in return the infinitely vibrant body of her music. What a pleasure to witness this shameless audacity! This stupefying, sensual weft of posture, cross intermingled with the muse herself! Perhaps we should speak of the genius of this scene. But confronted with such genius what do our censors decree? Ban the cello for women? Come on, you can't be serious!

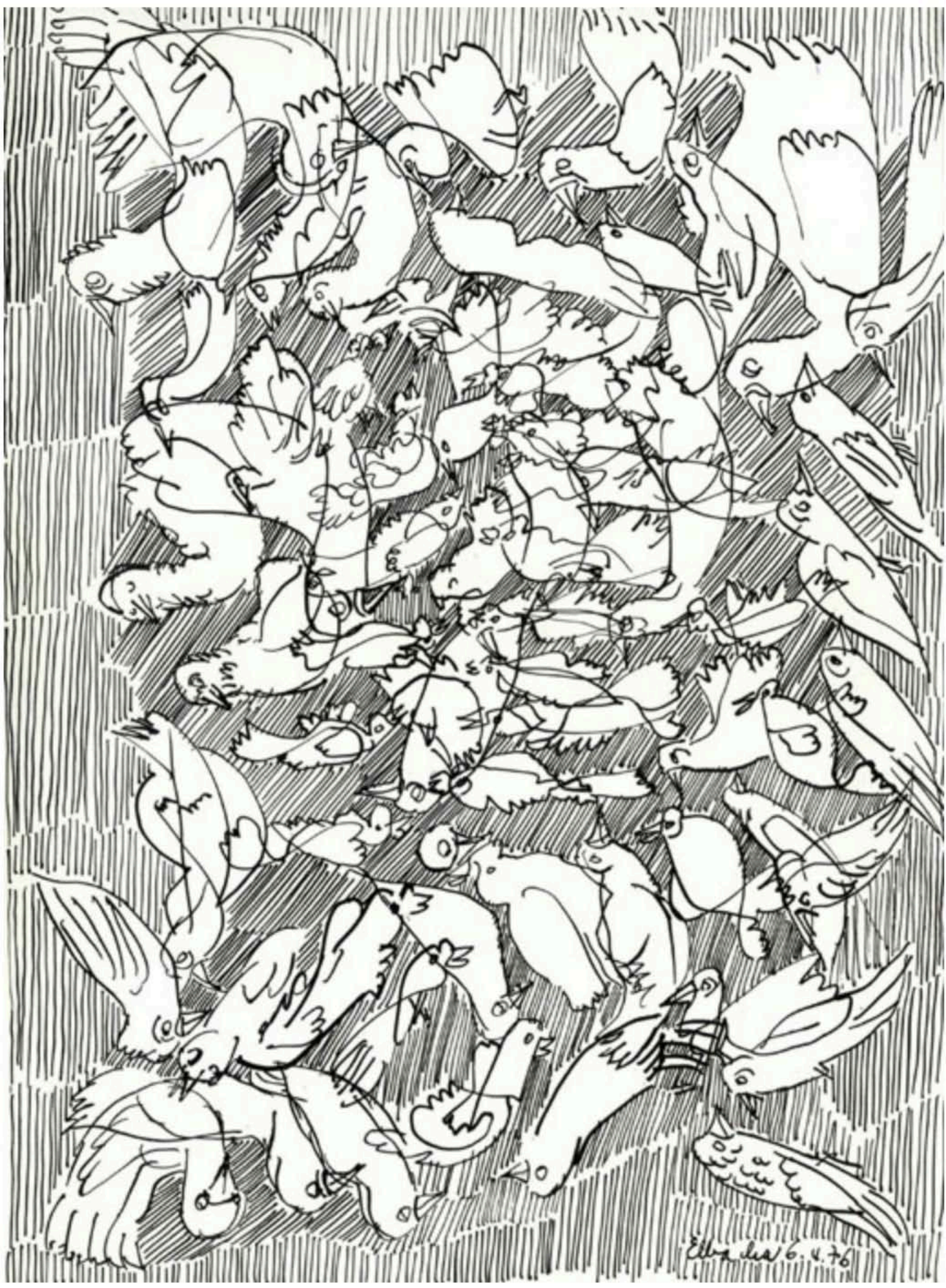
Another example : look at the members of the board, standing to attention. They're showing us exactly what they are. Serious, competent men who have succeeded in their careers. It's quite clear! They are happy to be there. But why are they happy? Why does one cross his legs while another wear a slightly frozen smile? The answer may not be visible in the picture

because to know you'd have to probe deep into hearts and minds. Will you take back your question which the image can never answer? Or can it? Our artist will tell you that what he has done is to invite you, a pretext he calls it, to call up the magic of imagination and its constant interrogation of so-called reality. In other words, once one enters the boundless space of imaginery there is no going back. "So, image for image, take mine. And so be it! Take the word of a painter. Because what a brochure proposes is absolutely not superior to what I propose in my work : it is nothing but a different view and the fact that it is less precise in no way diminishes its authenticity". Besides, in a sense, all images are false and all are true. False in objective terms, whose absence it underlines; true in respect to itself. That is why nothing is more living than this wild bird which has settled on the shoulders of one of our businessmen, probably to whisper in his ear that he is the captive of one thing only : his own vision of himself.

Let yourself be drawn into this strange secret, into this gently ironic reminder that all things bear the germ of their own opposite, and at very least the potential to transmute it. Therein lies the message of Amin El Bacha's "gentle subversion".

Paul Audi

(translated by Ian Meadows)



Elba dia 6. 4. 76



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Uhasa 72

بنك عودة

ش.م.ل.

AUDI

نسب وأرقام من الميزانية المجمعة

بنك عودة ش.م.ل. وأنفيلك ش.م.ل.

في ٩١/١٢/٢١

١- تطور الودائع

كانت في ٩٠/١٢/٢١ ١٥٤ مليار ل.ل.
بلغت في ٩١/١٢/٢١ ٢٩٢ مليار ل.ل.
تكون الزيادة ١٣٩ مليار ل.ل. أي بنسبة ٩٠٪

٢- مجموع السيولة:

بلغت في ٩١/١٢/٢١ ٢٤٦ مليار ل.ل.

٣- نسبة مجموع السيولة في مجموع الودائع هي ٨٠٪

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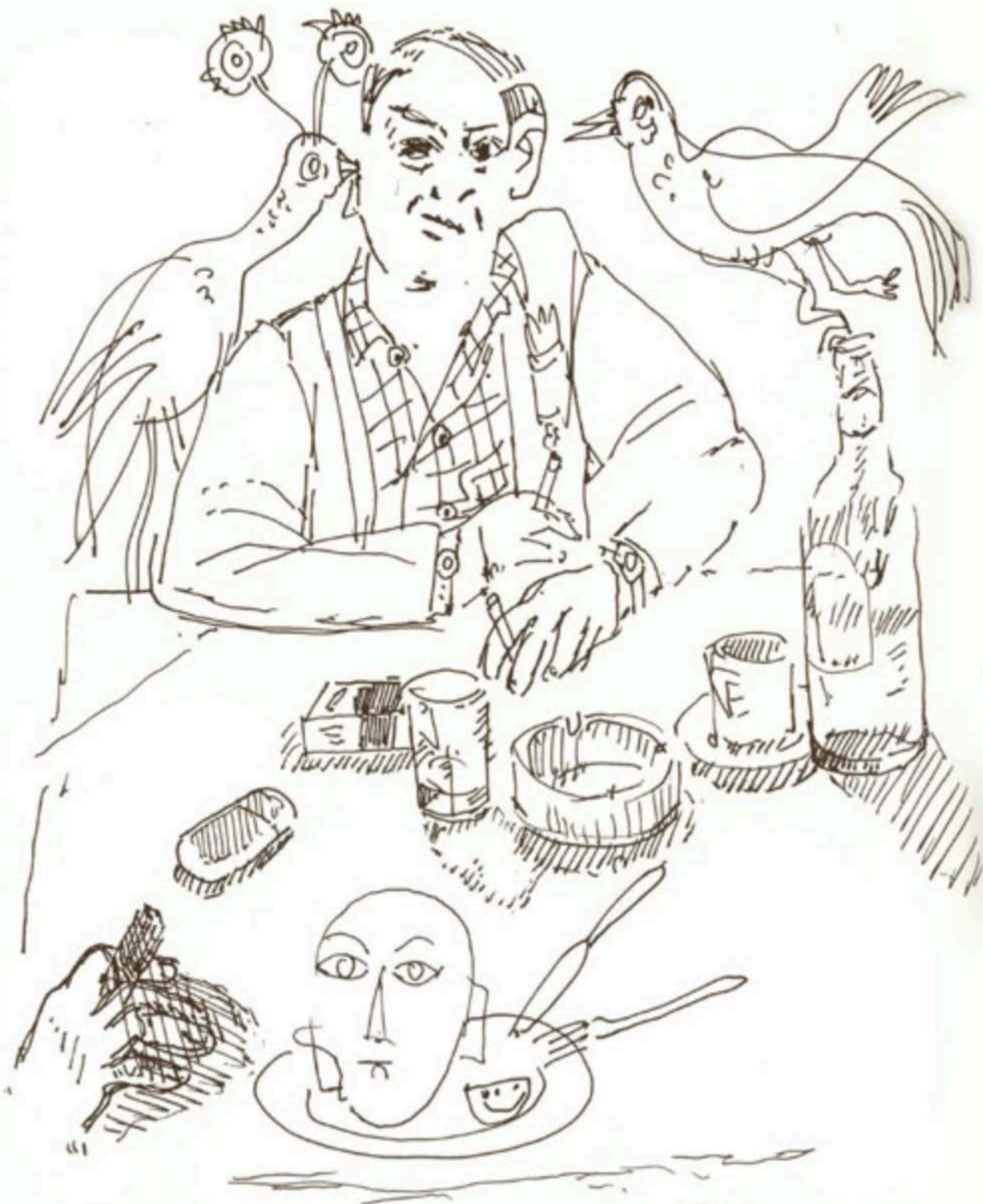
٤- الأموال الخاصة:

كانت في ٩٠/١٢/٢١ ٢١٠٠ مليون ل.ل.
بلغت في ٩١/١٢/٢١ ٤٠٢٦ مليون ل.ل.
تكون الزيادة ٢٠١٦ مليون ل.ل. أي بنسبة ١٠٠٪

علماً أن هذه الأموال سترفع إلى ٦ مليار ل.ل. خلال شهر آذار القادم.

ملاحظة: نسبة السيولة لدى أنفيلك ش.م.ل. هي ١٠٥٪
علماً أن بنك عودة ش.م.ل. يمتلك أنفيلك ش.م.ل. بنسبة ٩٩,٥٪

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