

Story 1100 (1974 Tape 56)

Narrator: Nihal Gürün, 59
(mother of Dikmen
Gürün Uçarer)

Location: İskenderun, kaza of
Hatay Province; tale
taped in İstanbul

Date: Summer 1974

Eşref's¹ Rejoinder

Eşref was a famous satirist and wit who used to live in this city. His writings have become part of the satirical tradition in İstanbul.

One day Eşref was floating along the Göksu River² in a small boat. In those days the Göksu River was a very popular place for recreation and pleasure. It was a small and gentle river, and it was possible to go a great distance upstream along the Göksu Valley in a boat

As Eşref and his family were enjoying themselves in their boat, they were hailed by one of Eşref's friends from a passing boat. On both boats, tables of fine food and drinks had been set. The friend and his companions had been drinking quite a bit. The friend shouted, "Eşref, lend your wife to the General!"

¹ Eşref's last name is not given

² The Göksu River was a small but scenic stream that flowed into the Bosphorus on the Asiatic side. There were many yalis-- a yalı is a summer house--along its banks. For views both of the mouth of the Göksu River and some of the yalis there, see pp. 288-291 of Sedad Hakkı Eldem's magnificently illustrated work Reminiscences of the Bosphorus (İstanbul, 1979).

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Eşref was quick to retort:³

Your snow has melted and is no longer hard.

To have something in your hand, hold this cucumber.⁴

³ The Turkish text is rimed:

Eridi kalmadı karın kararı.

Elin boş kalmasın tut şu hıyarı

⁴ In Turkish scatological humor, cucumber is a euphemism for the penis. It is so much a part of this tradition that sometimes in polite society anyone referring to real cucumbers in a salad will say, "Excuse me!" before uttering the word cucumber.