

# Melodies of the Palestinian

story collection

**Dr.Sanaa Shalan**  
(bint Na,imah)

**TRANSLATED BY**  
**Dr.ZERNADJI CHAHIRA**



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**TRANSLATED BY: Dr. ZERNADJI CHAHIRA**

The short story collection (*Melodies of the Palestinian*) by the writer Dr. Sanaa shalan (bint Na'imah) is not just ordinary musical compositions aren't melodies at all. They are threads, vibrant and alive, woven into the very essence of the Palestinian spirit. these melodies breathe with the moment, a living conversation between musician, emotion, and the hushed whispers of the audience. This inherent adaptability is a mirror to the Palestinian experience itself – a constant dance with change, a relentless pursuit of cultural preservation amidst a shifting landscape.

(*Melodies of the Palestinian*) becomes the canvas of the Palestinian soul. It paints not just the harsh realities of hardship, but also the unyielding hope that blooms even in the cracks of struggle. The soulful notes, carried on any instrument that can hold a melody, speak a language older than words. It's a language woven from the threads of generations, a song of resilience, dreams carried on the wind, and the echoes of a land etched in memory.

Tradition isn't a cage for (*Melodies of the Palestinian*); it's the fertile earth from which they sprout. Musicians find strength in the rich tapestry of their heritage, drawing inspiration from the past to birth something entirely new. This echoes the unwavering spirit of the Palestinian people,

who find solace in their ancestry as they forge a path towards a brighter tomorrow.

The magic of (Melodies of the Palestinian) thrives in the collective. Just as melodies intertwine in a beautiful conversation, Palestinian society itself is built on the bedrock of community and resilience. Their unwavering spirit, a chorus that has echoed through time, carries them through hardship.

By attuning ourselves to the art of (Melodies of the Palestinian), we gain a deeper appreciation for the Palestinian experience. It's a testament to their enduring spirit, their boundless creativity, and their remarkable ability to adapt. Their song, a powerful echo of resilience, continues to resonate through the ages, a testament to a people and a land, forever intertwined.

Sanaa Shalan, a Jordanian writer with deep Palestinian roots, is more than just an academic. Born in Amman, her family's story originates in the occupied West Bank village of Beit Nattif. As the eldest of twelve, her journey began in Jordanian schools, blossoming into a distinguished academic career.

Shalan's impressive educational background includes degrees in Arabic Language and Literature, culminating in a PhD focused on fear and symbolism in the works of Ahmed

Mansour Al-Zoubi. This academic prowess led her to the faculty of the University of Jordan, where she continues to share her knowledge with future generations.

While her research delves into modern Arabic literature, narrative theory, and gender studies, her heart lies in portraying the strength of Palestinian women. Membership in both the Jordanian Writers Association and the Palestinian Writers Union reflects her commitment to her heritage.

Beyond academia, Shalan's true passion lies in fiction. Her novels have many Awards like the Katara Prize solidify her position as a leading voice in contemporary Arabic literature.

But Shalan's power lies not in accolades, but in the stories she tells. Her masterful touch guides readers through the complexities of occupation, exile, and the unwavering desire for home.

The translator isn't merely a conduit of words, but a bridge builder. They stand between cultures, forging connections across invisible chasms. In their hands, language becomes a tool for empathy, a way to peek into a world often hidden from view. It's a pursuit fueled by imagination, a weapon in the fight for social justice, its impact echoing far beyond the page.

Yet, translation is a labor of love, sweat, and contemplation. It's a meticulous dance between research and reflection, a constant effort to construct a bridge strong enough to bear the weight of two cultures. The goal? To create something faithful to the original text, yet readily embraced by a new audience.

The task is daunting. Arabic and English, two languages with vastly different structures, pose a constant challenge. The translator must be a creative problem solver, finding solutions that are both effective and natural.

But there's a nagging doubt. A feeling that something precious gets lost in translation. An intangible essence, the soul of the author woven into the very fabric of the words. Can this essence truly be captured, or is translation inherently an act of betrayal?

Is the translator a traitor, then, twisting another's work in their attempt to represent it? Or is it the soul itself that's at stake, forever intertwined with the original creation?

This is why I, the so-called traitor, don't simply translate. I strive to build a new text, both a reflection of the original and a work with its own spirit. My aim is to capture the essence of the source material while crafting a bridge for the reader, one that allows them to cross over and understand even if the origin remains unfamiliar.

The verdict lies with the reader. Did I succeed in bridging the gap? Did I stay true to the original, or did I stray too far? The translator's soul is a mystery, and the answer, like the act of translation itself, is never quite black and white.

Dr. ZERNADJI CHAHIRA



## **Dedication**

To my Palestinian mother (Na'ima Al-Mashaikh), the eternal capital of my heart, who taught me the meaning of patience, resilience, giving, and courage.



# ***Homeland Melodies***



## Trees

Covered in lies, the invaders descended on the villages. Theirs was a symphony of violence: the crackle of gunfire, the screams of violators, the thunder of displaced lives. The Zionist gangs that invaded Palestinian villages and used slaughter, gunpowder, humiliation, violation, rape, displacement, looting and destruction said: It was the Palestinian people who attacked their members, killed their soldiers, and beat the drums of war. They spun a twisted narrative, portraying themselves as victims. The world, eager to believe a palatable story, showered them with support.

Only the olive, fig, orange, pomegranate and grape trees remember the faces of the Zionist gangs creeping through them, coming from afar, where there is cold, snow, cruelty and departure. Only the silent trees bear witness to the truth. Their ancient memory carries the image of these strangers, their faces etched with the coldness born from distant lands. They did not come as liberators, but as plunderers, with their hands stained with blood and theft.

Only the olive trees saw the strange, sinful faces, extending their hands to kill, plunder, rape, and steal breaths. These persecuted people have no choice but to open the interior of their lands with their axes to extract from them the secret of their immortality: fruitful trees and a pleasant smell. The oppressed, who were forced to leave their homes, turned to

their land to seek solace. With each blow of the axe, they discovered not only a source of sustenance, but also a defiant spirit. Fruit trees, fragrant symbols of resilience, whisper tales of true victims - martyrs etched on their bark, eternal testimony to a stolen homeland.

The whole world, willingly or unwillingly, applauded the Zionist murderers and usurpers so that history would not forget a crime called **Palestine**<sup>1</sup> assassination, and the world's applause rang hollow, whether hesitant or enthusiastic. Here history stands, engraved not in passing statements, but in the enduring strength of the people and the silent testimony of their land.

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<sup>1</sup>- **Palestine:** romanized: Filastīn[e]), officially known as the State of Palestine, Dawlat Filastīn), [f] is a country in the Levant region of West Asia. It is officially recognized as a state by the United Nations and numerous countries. Palestine shares borders with Jordan to the east, and Egypt to the southwest. The state comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Population of Palestine exceeds five million people, and covers an area of 6,020 square kilometres (2,320 sq mi). Jerusalem is its proclaimed capital and the official language is Arabic. Majority of Palestinians practice Islam, while Christianity also has a significant presence.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State\\_of\\_Palestine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Palestine)

## Feet

Her feet were martyred in the battle, as were all her family members. They were gathered around a short wooden table, waiting for the call to Foutoor<sup>1</sup>, when a Zionist shell devoured them.. Eid came and she was alone in the hospital. Her friends at school visited her, accompanied by some of their teachers. They were all wearing identical leather shoes provided by a donor from outside Palestine in a large shipment sent as a gift from his shoe factory.

Her shoe was next to her head.

Her friends felt guilty as they strutted in front of her in their new shoes, while she was helpless and without feet....

The sun set below the horizon, painting the wing with colors of sadness and hope. Barefoot angels, their laughter muffled, surrounded her bed, with every step a silent prayer. Illusory shoes danced on her feet, a testament to the spirit that refused to be trapped. Her heart, a cracked mirror reflecting their love, the leather shoes, once a symbol of charity and compassion, now as neglected as husks. Instead, the cold ground hugged their soles. The air was full of unspoken apologies, and her smile, though tense, held a hint of triumph. They finally learned the true meaning of walking in someone else's shoes - not with borrowed soles, but with open hearts.

---

<sup>1</sup>- the evening meal to break the Ramadan fast.

On the second day of Eid, the hospital floor shone and turned into a field of emerald grass. Her phantom feet, led by the whispers of the wind, danced between the blades, her laughter echoing in the silent pavilion. The smell of spices and laughter filled the air, like a ghostly feast where her family, despite their distance, was present in every beat of her heart. As the sun went down, casting long shadows, she realized that love, like a stubborn vine, can flourish even in the cracks of loss. In the quiet of the amber, a new feast was born, a feast in which the feast was not about food, but about a shared grief and a bond forged in the fires of loss.

## **Hitting the target**

He doesn't like to play football, but he likes to watch his cousins play in that small square in the old city hidden behind the old houses and cellars.

He promised his mother that he would return home before sunset, but the setting sun suddenly fell on the place without fear, so he hurried home carrying his promise to his mother before dark. Relatives and friends encouraged him to finish the last round of play and determine the winner according to the final score. He hoped from the bottom of his heart that the last minutes would pass quickly in order to achieve the decisive goal. He quickly returns home before his mother gets angry.

Minutes passed until the enemy decided to enter the match in the final moments of his rounds. He entered the game without permission. And hit the ultimate goal. He fired a deadly missile at the bodies of young players who did not return home before dark.

He fled, not towards the sanctuary of the homeland, but rather into the depths of the labyrinthine alleys, and the weight of false promises clinging to his torn breath. The sunset, which was a harbinger of homecoming, now paints the city in nightmarish colors. The boy who hated football escaped from

its harsh echo, carrying not a result, but a burden heavier than any trophy.

This is no longer a story of lost sunsets and parental scolding. It was a descent into the shadows, a stark canvas where innocence collided with darkness, and where the rules of the game were rewritten in the crimson ink of violence.

## Rape

Dreams in Palestine are forbidden to its people by a customary Zionist decision, but despite that, by day and by night, she caresses her dream wedding. The vision of a flowing, silk white dress whispering against her skin fills her mind. She imagines her groom, his kind eyes reflecting the love she craves, his strong arms a promise of forever. Fragrant lilies, a symbol of new beginnings, adorn the door<sup>1</sup> way where she envisions sticking the dough, a tradition of prosperity. But a deeper yearning tugs at her heart. The image of the bride entering, cloaked in her grandfather's worn garment, speaks of a lineage, a connection that transcends time. It's in this cherished dream that she finds solace, waiting for the day it becomes her reality.

Her external beauty was faint and did not attract attention, but the beauty of her soul was a ray of light, and few men could see the lights within her eyes.

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<sup>1</sup>- to stick dough and flowers on the door: Sticking dough and flowers on the door: This ritual, often seen in fairytales or cultural traditions, could symbolize welcoming good fortune, fertility, and prosperity into the new home. Flowers might represent beauty and joy, while dough could represent abundance and nourishment. Grandfather's cloak: Wearing her grandfather's cloak signifies the bride's connection to her family history and the protection or blessings passed down through generations. The cloak might also represent wisdom, tradition, and a sense of belonging. Marrying a tall, handsome man: This signifies the bride's desire for a desirable and strong partner. "Tall" might symbolize status and achievement, "handsome" suggests physical attractiveness.

A fiery protectiveness burned in her heart. When invaders dared to attack her father on his own land, she wouldn't stand by. In a flash, a stone met the hand that struck her old man, a satisfying thud echoing the fury that coursed through her veins. But her defiance came at a heavy price. Thrown into the prison, she became a captive, a pawn in a twisted game of revenge.

Regret was a stranger to her. She'd defend her father a thousand times over. Yet, a deep ache settled in her gut as she thought of the gift, a symbol of hope for her future husband, now callously wasted by the soldiers within these cold, unforgiving walls. It was their way of breaking her, of scorching the very essence of who she was. Rape, a vile tool wielded to extinguish her pride and steal her self-esteem.

Emerging from that prison, she was no longer the same. Her dreams lay shattered, innocence stolen. But amidst the wreckage, a flicker of something unexpected arose. Seven young men, strong and honorable, stood before her. Drawn to her like moths to a flame, they didn't see a broken woman. They saw a warrior, her spirit untamed by the horrors she'd endured. They came not out of pity, but out of respect, a desire to win back the honor that those prison walls could never steal. In their eyes, she wasn't a victim, but a testament to the enduring strength of the human spirit.

## Quadruplets

They were a meticulously sculpted quartet, four little girls with faces like fallen angels. Their hair, a cascade of wild beauty, mirrored the desert rose in bloom. Their eyes, the color of sunlit meadows, held a depth that echoed the swirling mystery of a rain-drenched Roman pond.

Identical twins, they were an inseparable unit. Only their mother, Basila, could tell them apart with a secret code – a color for each girl, a silent language understood by those closest to them. Clothing served as their outward expression; a tapestry woven for the world to see.

Today, however, their resolve was as unwavering as the desert itself. Their beloved Uncle Ibrahim was marrying after Eid al-Fitr, and they craved a unified front – a pair of identical white dresses, a symbol of their unbreakable bond. Basila, despite her reservations, couldn't deny their fierce determination.

With a sigh, she conceded. The dresses, embodying their shared dream, became theirs. They clung to them, inseparable, a silent vow etched on their faces. Basila, needing some provisions, left them for a fleeting moment

with the kind saleswoman. A quick trip to the market and she'd be back, reunited for the journey home.

But fate, a cruel twist of destiny, intervened. A missile, a searing streak of violence, rained down on the unsuspecting market. The once vibrant dress shop was now a scene of devastation, a chilling echo of the fleeting nature of joy. The girls, their white dresses forever marred, were caught within the inferno.

Basila returned to a scene ripped from a nightmare. Where the market once teemed with life, there was only scorched earth. Among the debris, all that remained were remnants of torn white fabric – a haunting echo of the innocence that had been. The weight of an unbearable truth settled upon her. The inseparable quartet, her beloved girls, were gone, their unique spark extinguished. She began gathering the scattered flesh to her chest after she was unable to distinguish for the first time in her life. Between her four daughters.

## **The Mother**

They call her Mother Khadra. Not a mother in the traditional sense, for she hasn't given birth to a single child. Yet, her heart overflows with maternal love for a multitude. Every soul held captive within the walls of the prisons becomes her son, embraced as family the moment they cross the threshold.

Her life story remains a whispered mystery, but of theirs, she knows every detail. Days are woven from threads of tireless visits, a comforting presence for those confined and a beacon of support for families on the outside, bound by a shared struggle. These "sons" – not by blood, but by circumstance – are those who answered the call to defend a cause close to her heart.

She is the mother of all prisoners in Zionist prisons in occupied Palestine. Every Palestinian or non-Palestinian prisoner becomes her son as soon as he enters the prison. She spends all her days in prison visiting her captive sons from inside Palestine and from abroad.

She is the mother of the Jordanian who left his school and came to defend Palestine. She is the mother of the Iraqi prisoner who swore to pray in Al-Aqsa Mosque after its liberation, with his participation. She is the mother of the Yemeni prisoner who came to participate in the liberation of Al-Aqsa. She is the mother of the Algerian prisoner who swore to struggle to liberate Palestine just as his father and

grandfather struggled to liberate their country from the French colonialists. She is the mother of the Egyptian prisoner who left his bride and came to Palestine to defend her because she is the most beautiful bride.

It counts the days remaining until they are released from their prisons, and follows up with lawyers and private institutions to follow up on prisoners' cases. It also sends letters to their families and writes false letters to them if they do not receive a response for some reason from their families outside Palestine.

She is the mother of all prisoners. She deals with the merchants in the market and refuses to bargain on the prices of her goods of vegetables and fruits.

## **swing**

The wind whispered secrets through the skeletal branches of the dead trees that surrounded the Zion Girl's village, her laugh, a joyful and terrifying melody at the same time, echoing in the wind as she pumped her legs, pushing herself higher and higher on the forbidden swing. It wasn't just any swing, though. It was carved from a crimson wood that seemed to bleed in the dying sunlight, and it pulsed with an unnatural rhythm, reflecting the frantic beating of the girl's heart. This red-skinned Zionist girl spent most of her time playing on the swing, which was the Palestinian girl's dream, and perhaps She needed a companion like her to share her fun and games and the dangerous secrets of her childhood, as she thought. One night, under a sky choked with a million watchful eyes, the girl slipped through a gap in the barbed wire, leaving behind her a trail of shimmering crimson feathers, like a bleak promise. She ran to the swing, its shape strange against the dying sun. The wind howled, carrying a chorus of guttural whispers. The shadows lengthened, turning into monstrous shapes that penetrated the edges of the vision. But she doesn't reach it. Zionist settlers chase her with axes, knives and daggers.

They cut her into pieces and burned her with a burning fire as punishment because she was an innocent Palestinian girl who dreamed of playing on the swing of a cursed, red-skinned Zionist girl.

## Muezzin<sup>1</sup>

His old age, illness and poor eyesight did not prevent him from going to the mosque to call the call to prayer five times a day and during forty years everyone in the city of **Hebron**<sup>2</sup> memorized the call to prayer with his voice

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<sup>1</sup>- The **muezzin** is the person who proclaims the call to the daily prayer (ṣalāt) five times a day (Fajr prayer, Zuhr prayer, Asr prayer, Maghrib prayer and Isha prayer) at a mosque from the minaret. The muezzin plays an important role in ensuring an accurate prayer schedule for the Muslim community. The English word *muezzin* is borrowed from, *mu'adh-dhin* [mu.ʔað.ðin], simplified *mu'azzin*, the active participle of Arabic: "to call". Thus, it means "the calling one". The professional muezzin is chosen for his good character, voice and skills to serve at the mosque. Muezzins are typically men. The muezzin is not considered a cleric, but in a position comparable to a Christian verger. He is responsible for keeping the mosque clean, for rolling the carpets, for cleaning the toilets and the place where people wash their hands, face and feet when they perform the Wuḍū' (Arabic: *wuḍū'* the "purification" of ablution) before offering the prayer. When calling to prayer, the muezzin faces the qiblah, the direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah, while reciting the *adhan*.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muezzin>

<sup>2</sup>- **The City of Hebron**: is a Palestinian city located in the southern West Bank, about 30 kilometers south of Jerusalem. It's nestled in the Judaean Mountains, sitting at an elevation of 930 meters above sea level. Hebron is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with a rich history dating back over 4,000 years. Hebron is significant for its religious importance to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The city is home to the Cave of the Patriarchs, which is believed to be the burial site of important biblical figures such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their wives. Due to this religious significance, Hebron is considered the second holiest city in Judaism after Jerusalem and one of the holiest cities in Islam. Hebron is the largest city in the West Bank by population, with over 215,000 residents. The city has a complex

A Zionist soldier ordered him to go back to his house and not to raise the call to prayer because of the curfew that is imposed on the city at all times, but he refused to miss the call to prayer. A tense silence stretched between them. The frail figure of the old man stood defiant; his voice raspy but firm. "No," he declared, his words echoing in the empty street. "The call to prayer is for all to hear, a beacon in the darkness. I will not let fear extinguish its light, not even at the cost of my life!"

A Zionist bullet killed him on the courtyard of the old city, a few steps away from the door of the mosque. The Zionist soldiers recklessly dragged him into an armored track, in a precautionary measure of unknown duration, but his soul was determined to raise the call to prayer on time. The voice of the muezzin in the sky of Hebron, bidding farewell to his body, which he left far away.

The muezzin, lay crumpled on the cobblestones, the crimson stain blossoming on his chest a stark contrast to his white robe. But a tremor shook the earth, and a gasp escaped the soldiers who had just silenced him. A spectral voice, ancient and strong, echoed from the minaret -his voice, yet somehow grander, imbued with an otherworldly power.

---

and divided political landscape. A portion of the city is under full Israeli control, while the remainder is administered by the Palestinian Authority. This division has led to ongoing tensions and friction between the Israeli and Palestinian communities in Hebron.

## **The Holocaust**

He watched them all attack the old Palestinian farmer, his wife, and his little granddaughter, separating them north of the barbed wire that separates the destroyed area from the old Palestinian field, and tearing them apart with axes. At the same time, he stopped his hand while responding to the blows of his little granddaughter, who was clinging to her grandmother's lap, while the axes of the Zionist invaders were combing her flesh from behind.

He saw them doing it in cold blood, gladly, and for no reason other than to enjoy torturing defenseless people.

Terror choked him. Helpless, he witnessed the brutal attack on the Palestinian family. Their screams echoed in his ears, a horrifying counterpoint to the chilling joy on the faces of the attackers. It was a monstrous scene, far removed from the stories his parents told him. His mother approached him and patted his shoulder with her hand stained with the blood of innocent people. Then she carried him in her arms. We Jews are weak and we have to defend ourselves

His father added: "It's like someone reading a forged book." They killed us there. Yes, in the Holocaust in Germany, they killed us all. We must take revenge on the whole world for this."

The child was silent and continued to stare at the faces of his brutal parents, and he secretly prayed to God to send his parents to hell, no matter what the Holocaust.

## **the miracle**

Over the course of forty sunrises, bombs rained down, each explosion a harsh indictment of a world that had turned its back. He saw death as a predator stripped of its mask, but people met his gaze with defiance. He had learned then that death, with all its power, was a coward, a face-stealer, and nothing more.

In the war-torn wasteland, where hopes were bombed into oblivion, he never believed in miracles, because he saw death separating the faces of innocent people and grazing in the burning land of revolution and struggle against the Zionist entity.

He comes from Sweden to fight death and pain in this hospital, which has become crowded and doomed to be like an abandoned station haunted by evil spirits. However, in this besieged hospital, the symphony of life defied the apocalyptic tune.

The bellies of all Palestinian women, whether they are young or in their mid-teens, even unmarried women, have never been touched by a man, or cannot have children. Filled with quadruplets, five, or sextuplets, the wombs moved with screaming, violent movements with the declared fetuses growing at an unnatural speed, and almost all the fetuses leaving the womb to become babies, slipping into the sticky world to continue the path of struggle.

He believes that the time of miracles is over, but now he believes that the Palestinian woman's womb is a miracle capable of reviving life. Disbelief stuck to him like splinter, jagged and heavy. He saw the feast of death on the faces of innocent people, and their laughter suffocated by the smoke of the revolution.

He decides to ignore the bombing and the wounded that rain down on him from all sides, until he gets enough rest and begins to receive these children who come to this world.

## Lost

Decades have bled into one another, thirty long years since the enemy's fury ripped through her village in - **Tulkarm**<sup>1</sup>. Looting, screams, the metallic tang of blood – the chaos swallowed her youngest son whole.

Ever since, her life has been a relentless pursuit. Shelters, hospitals, prisons, graveyards – hollow echoes of her son's name. She scoured the faces of his companions, searching for a flicker of him hidden beneath the trauma. But her quest yielded only dust and despair.

Seven sons she offered as martyrs, each a valiant shield against the unrelenting foe. Yet, her heart ached for the eighth. Not for a reunion, but to fulfill a mother's twisted vow. All her sons, pledged to the defense of Palestine. And a vow, once spoken, is sacred, even if the offering is carved from a heart already shattered.

This is not a story of a broken woman, but of a woman unbroken. Her fire may be fueled by grief, but it burns with the unwavering purpose of a mother, a warrior, a keeper of a promise etched in blood.

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<sup>1</sup>- **Tulkarm** or **Tulkarem** is a Palestinian city in the West Bank, the capital of the Tulkarm Governorate of the State of Palestine., the Palestinian cities of Nablus and Jenin to the east. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2017 Tulkarm had a population of 64,532 Tulkarm is under the administration of the Palestinian National Authority.

## **Dates**

His grandmother recounts her years of calamities and misfortunes whenever he, his brothers, and his cousins want to joke with her and take her out of the Sufi devotional atmosphere she has been living in for years since the martyrdom of her middle son at the hands of the Zionists.

They choose the birth of their last granddaughter and ask her: When was that? By staring at their faces, she cannot find a pale event associated with this birth. She was silent for a while, then smiled at them with sadness and resentment, and said: “I remember when my children were martyred, and you must remember when your children were born.”

## **The Wedding Dress**

The once-pristine wedding dress lies crumpled on her bed, a testament to a promise long deferred. Years have leeched the vibrant white to a dull echo, the fabric worn thin from countless nights spent draped across the bed or folded in the belly of her old leather suitcase – a worn companion that now sleeps atop her closet.

Dust, the enemy in all its subtlety, had necessitated multiple cleanings. Each wash a bittersweet ritual, the water swirling with the remnants of faded joy that clung to the silk. When she donned the dress, the worn silk whispering against her aging skin, she'd catch her reflection in the cracked-cornered mirror. A ghost of a smile would play on her lips as she murmured a promise – a happy day, soon.

Memories flickered – joyful parades before friends and family, the dress a beacon of hope in a life now shrouded in sorrow. Each pirouette, each fleeting moment of imagined happiness, etched a deeper line on the face reflected back at her. The lines weren't just from age, but from the weight of unfulfilled dreams, the echo of a promise clinging to a tattered gown.

For many months, her wedding dress has been waiting, and no relief is coming near her or it, so that it can fly to her

husband-in-waiting after crossing **The Rafah Border Crossing**<sup>1</sup> to the nearest airport in Alexandria or Cairo, to board the first plane to Dubai, where her husband lives and works, and where she met him for the first-time years ago, when she was visiting her sister who has been living there with her husband and children for twenty years.

Her husband needed many months to be able to send his family from Hebron to the Beach refugee camp in Gaza to propose to her, and then to entrust his father with a legal power of attorney to complete the marriage procedures with her.

Since that moment, she has been waiting for the Rafah crossing to open so that she can join her husband, but the crossing has been permanently closed for a long time, and she failed to cross her desired destination, and she returned home defeated and sad, listening with shyness and suppressing the crying of her wedding dress, which has been dreaming for a long time to fly to the arms of the man she married with a stay of execution, pending the fate of a prison crossing that does not even open its doors to a sad wedding

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<sup>1</sup>- **The Rafah Border Crossing**, romanized: *Ma`bar Rafah*) or **Rafah Crossing Point** is the sole crossing point between Egypt and Palestine's Gaza Strip. It is located on the Egypt–Palestine border. Under a 2007 agreement between Egypt and Israel, Egypt controls the crossing but imports through the Rafah crossing require Israeli approval.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafah\\_Border\\_Crossing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafah_Border_Crossing)

dress. The wedding dress lay crumpled on the bed, its once pristine white now tinged with the dust of yearning. Each crease held a whispered promise, each stain a memory of joyous tears and hopeful anticipation. The old leather suitcase, perched atop the closet like a weathered sentinel, housed her trousseau, each silken garment humming with dreams deferred.

## The gravedigger<sup>1</sup>

He walked with a swagger, his head held high, the nickname a badge of honor etched on his brow" He reveled in the hushed awe it elicited, a name whispered with both fear and grudging respect. His father, a specter in his memories, was a legend, an engineer whose brilliance birthed nightmares for their enemy. He is proud of his father, whom the Zionist enemy -calls "the gravedigger."

He wasn't just any engineer; his father sculpted symphonies of destruction, each circuit board a verse in a macabre poem. His tools weren't screwdrivers and soldering irons, but whispers of sand and the cold caress of moonlight on steel. He spun webs of detonation, his creations luring the enemy into pits that yawned open like hungry mouths, swallowing them whole in a chorus of earth and fire.

He is an engineer specializing in telecommunications. He could have been one of the most important scientists in the world in this field if he had been given a fair chance and had

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<sup>1</sup>- **A person whose** job is to dig graves: This is the most literal meaning of the term. Gravediggers are typically employed by cemeteries or funeral homes. Their job is to prepare graves for burials, ensuring they are the correct size and depth and in the designated location. A metaphor for death: The gravedigger can also be seen as a metaphor for death itself. In this sense, the gravedigger represents the inevitability of death and the finality of life

not been a prisoner of a continuous struggle against his Zionist enemy.

His father designs the most important systems for remotely detonating bombs. He lost his legs in one of the enemy's raids on his headquarters. He miraculously escaped death. From that day on, he devoted himself to burying the Jews. He makes traps for them that turn the earth into hell under their feet and bury them in their places.

He insists that his friends call him "the son of the gravedigger," proud of his father. And whenever he hears them glorify him with this title, he remembers how much he misses seeing his father, whom he has not seen for more than a year. He is busy digging graves for Zionist soldiers..

## The dwarf<sup>1</sup>

Salah, a man sculpted in miniature, earned his nickname "The Dwarf." Yet, his stature belied a spirit that soared with eagles. Scornful glances and the indifference of beauties held no sway over him. Freedom for Palestine, that was his burning desire, and a glorious martyr's death, his ultimate purpose.

But fate, a fickle mistress, dealt him an early hand. Martyrdom, ever eager, knocked on the oaken door of his soul one night during a daring commando raid. Abu al-Nur, their steadfast leader, guided their steps towards the enemy's most guarded secrets. A hidden landmine, a silent predator,

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<sup>1</sup>- The word "**dwarf**": can have several meanings, depending on the context: A person of unusually small stature: This is the most common meaning of "dwarf." In medical terms, dwarfism is defined as an adult height below 4'10" (147 cm). There are many different medical conditions that can cause dwarfism, and it's important to remember that people with dwarfism are individuals with their own unique experiences and preferences. A plant or animal that is atypically small: This meaning is similar to the first, but it refers to non-human organisms. For example, there are many dwarf plant varieties that are bred for their compact size. \*A legendary creature: In folklore and mythology, dwarfs are often depicted as small, magical beings who live underground or in hidden places. They are sometimes portrayed as skilled craftsmen and miners, and they may also be associated with treasure or trickery. \*A **star**: In astronomy, a dwarf star is a star that is much smaller and less luminous than the Sun. Examples include red dwarfs and white dwarfs\* To make something appear small: This meaning is less common, but it can be used figuratively to describe something that is overshadowed or insignificant compared to something else.

lay in wait. Its hungry breath stole Salah's legs in a single, brutal strike.

His comrades, hearts heavy with despair, offered their backs to carry him to safety. But Salah, ever the strategist, saw the burden he'd become. One less warrior meant one more life spared. His voice, hoarse with urgency, demanded they leave him. Hesitation flickered in their eyes, a silent plea. With a tremor in his own voice, he threatened to become their enemy if they didn't flee the approaching snarl of enemy hounds.

Tear-filled eyes and leaden hearts obeyed. Salah, a lone sentinel, held the pursuing darkness at bay with the staccato song of his gunfire. The last bullet sighed from his weapon as the enemy's hail of lead found its mark.

Months passed, his body a prisoner in foreign soil. Finally released, riddled with bullet wounds and marred, he returned home. A small, broken trunk, a testament to his sacrifice, was all that remained. His feet, stolen, but his spirit, unconquerable.

His comrades, bound by the invisible threads of brotherhood, refused to let his final resting place mirror his physical form. He deserved a grave that echoed the immensity of his soul, a monument to his towering spirit. And so, they laid him to rest, a small man in a giant's embrace.

## The Canaanite<sup>1</sup>

His enemies prevented him from practicing the greatest joy in life, which was teaching Palestinian history to his people. They destroyed the school, which was his temple of pleasure, and dispersed his students after they killed his student - Saad - who called himself the Canaanite, proud of his origins, and called his enemies mutants<sup>2</sup>. The once vibrant school, his haven, lay in smoldering ruins, a testament to the barbarity

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<sup>1</sup>- **Canaanite** meaning can refer to a few different things, depending on the context: 1. The Canaanite people: If you're referring to the Canaanites themselves, they were an ancient Semitic people who inhabited the land of Canaan, roughly corresponding to modern-day , Palestine, Lebanon, and parts of Syria, from around 3000 BC to 1200 BC. They were known for their maritime trade, advanced metalworking, and polytheistic religion. 2. The Canaanite language: The term "Canaanite" can also refer to the extinct language spoken by these people. It belonged to the Northwest Semitic branch of the Afroasiatic language family, closely related to Hebrew, Phoenician, and Aramaic. 3. Canaanite religion: The religious beliefs and practices of the Canaanites are another aspect of their "meaning." They worshipped a pantheon of gods and goddesses associated with nature and fertility, with Baal being the chief deity. Their religious practices included temple rituals, animal sacrifices, and fertility rites. 4. Figurative or symbolic meaning: In some contexts, "Canaanite" can be used more figuratively or symbolically. For example, it might be used to describe someone who is associated with materialism, hedonism, or idolatry.

<sup>2</sup>- **mutants**: the issue of God transforming some nations due to their injustice is a complex topic that has been discussed by scholars and theologians for centuries. There is no single definitive answer in Islam, but there are many different interpretations based on the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. One interpretation is that God's transformation of some nations is a divine punishment for their injustice and corruption. God is Just and Merciful, and He does not wrong anyone, but He sends down punishment on the unjust to deter them and show His power and greatness. The Holy Quran mentions examples of previous nations that were transformed due to their injustice, such as the people of Noah, who were transformed into monkeys, and the people of Aad, who were transformed into birds. Another interpretation is that God's transformation of some nations is a warning to other nations from falling into the same sin.

of his foes. They had silenced not just the echoes of laughter, but the very whispers of the past he so cherished.

Saad, his brightest star, was extinguished. The young man, brimming with pride in his heritage, had dared to call them "mutants," a defiant spark in a world choked by ignorance. Now, scattered like dust in the wind were his students, each one a repository of knowledge the scholar had painstakingly nurtured.

He was a warrior without a sword, his weapon the tapestry of time. Yet, despair would not claim him. The legacy he carried, the stories entrusted to his care, burned brighter than the flames that consumed his temple. He would become the living archive, the voice of history refusing to be silenced. His enemies might have stolen his classroom, but they could never extinguish the fire of knowledge that burned within him.

He decided to take revenge for his martyred students. The scholar, his eyes burning with the fires of vengeance, had become a student of war. Gone was the teacher, replaced by a strategist who poured over maps and whispered tactics with a band of resistance fighters. Their target: the very heart of the mutant camp, a pyre to consume the legacy of those who had stolen his.

The plan was a tangled serpent, fraught with peril. Fortifications bristled with defenses, patrolled by watchful eyes. Yet, the scholar, fueled by the memory of his fallen students, particularly the radiant face of Saad, the Canaanite boy who had called them "mutants" with such defiant pride,

toiled night and day. He studied their routines, their weaknesses, becoming a phantom in the shadows until... victory, like a thief in the night, was within reach.

From his hidden vantage point, a pang of sorrow twisted through him. None of these faces held the warmth of a Canaanite sun, the same sun that had kissed Saad's skin. Still, with a deep breath that tasted of ash and grief, he ignited the flames. The camp roared in protest, a funeral pyre for his stolen joy. As the fire cleansed, a strange sense of peace, a Canaanite sense of purification, washed over him. In the dying embers, he could almost see Saad, a ghost of a smile playing on his lips. The scholar raised a hand, his voice raw with emotion, and uttered an ancient incantation, the forgotten words of Canaan. May the flames, he roared, expel every trespasser, every mutant, who dared defile his land, his people! The wind seemed to carry his words, a defiant prayer for a future bathed in the golden light of his heritage.

## **Traitor**

He doesn't know why his commander in the Zionist army is pushing him to confront the angry Palestinian landowners who are protesting the confiscation of their land by their cursed entity. His commander tells him that because of his Arab origins, he is able to understand them better, but he knows deep down that they are sending him to them because they don't care if the angry landowners kill him as long as he is one of them and of their skin, even if he has shed his roots and stripped himself of his origin. Why, he thought, did his commander insist on throwing him into this viper's nest? The air crackled with the anger of the assembled landowners; their faces contorted in fury over the land seizure his "entity" had orchestrated.

His commander, a man whose gaze never seemed to settle on anything for long, offered a placating smile. "You're one of them, aren't you? Blood tells. You'll understand their... frustrations better than any of us."

But he understood all too well. He understood the sting of betrayal, the simmering resentment of a people dispossessed. He also understood the cold calculation in his commander's eyes. They were sending the Arab to face the Arabs, an expendable shield – someone whose death, if it came to that, wouldn't ruffle a single feather within the entity's sterile halls.

A bitter laugh escaped his lips. He, who had meticulously shed his origins, who had traded the warmth of his heritage for the sterile efficiency of the entity, was now deemed "one of them" simply for the color of his skin. They didn't care that he'd uprooted himself, that his loyalty lay solely with the entity's goals. He was a convenient pawn, someone they could sacrifice without a qualm. Fear choked his voice. Arabic, the language of his dreams, felt foreign on his tongue. A stinging blow to the head, a rock launched from the angry throng, spurred him to flee. The earth beneath his feet seemed to tremble, rejecting his hesitant steps. He was an outsider, cast adrift, no longer belonging anywhere.

## **Lion's Milk<sup>1</sup>**

When the call to defend his land echoed through the village, he wasn't afraid. Fear couldn't find purchase in a heart nurtured by a pride of lionesses. He stood tall, his gaze resolute, the moonlight milk shimmering on his calloused palm. This wasn't just milk, it was an elixir of bravery, each sip carrying the whispers of countless tales woven by firelight, each drop imbued with the unwavering spirit of generations.

When he ascended the jagged peak, eyes scanning the horizon, he didn't see soldiers, he saw birds. Not just any birds, but crows, their dark shapes blotting the sky, carrying the stench of greed and oppression. He was not just a man, he was a falcon, soaring high on the wings of his mothers'

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<sup>1</sup>- **Lion's Milk:** The phrase is a metaphor for courage, suggesting that the brave person has been nursed by a strong and courageous lioness, rather than a weak and feeble human woman. It implies that the brave person's strength and courage stem from being raised in a challenging and demanding environment, similar to how a lioness's cubs are nurtured to be strong and fearless hunters. This metaphor highlights the notion that courage is not an inherent trait but rather a quality that can be cultivated and nurtured. By associating courage with the lioness, a symbol of strength, ferocity, and resilience, the phrase suggests that courage can be developed through exposure to challenging situations and by learning from strong role models.

The phrase also carries connotations of resilience, perseverance, and unwavering determination. Just as a lioness must be strong and determined to protect her cubs, so too must the courageous person be unwavering in their pursuit of their goals and in facing adversity.

love, his keen eyes guided by the moonlight in his veins. His dive was swift, silent, deadly. Each strike wasn't just a blow, it was an ode to the women who raised him, their love echoing in the wind, whispering tales of freedom in the ears of the fallen crows. The enemies hung a picture of him on the facades of the city, and wrote the following words on it to intimidate him and destroy his morale: "This terrorist is wanted by the authorities and will be killed soon."

The next day, a new photo emerged of him holding an RPG. He had pasted it over yesterday's photo and written on it, in contempt and provocation of his enemy: "This freedom fighter will kill the entire enemy army and they are all wanted by him."

## **Embryo**

The world turned silent. No longer the familiar rhythm of his mother's heartbeat, the comforting rumble of her voice. Instead, a cold, sharp sensation tore through the darkness. He knew nothing of blades or brutality, only the sudden, jarring expulsion. The little fetus that slipped from its mother's womb did not know why a sharp knife pierced its transparent silver cover .

He landed with a muffled thump. Not the soft cradle of his mother's womb, but a harsh, unforgiving earth. An instinct, primal and pure, urged him to cry out, but no sound emerged. His vision, hazy and unfocused, caught a glimpse of crimson staining the once familiar warmth. The hand of a midwife, relative, or woman to take care of him did not reach him until he fell on his head for no reason. He fell on his face, prostrating as if kissing the ground. His mother was dying, gasping quickly, after a brutal Zionist soldier cut off her right breast with a new blow from his brutal knife, then opened her stomach to remove her fetus from it.

His mother. A gasp, a shudder, a slow fading of the only comfort he'd ever known. A sense of wrongness, a coldness that seeped in, replacing the lifeblood that was draining away. No one cared about his dead, bleeding mother until she was extinguished. His forehead remained touching the ground, and his small, soft, bare neck challenged the face of

his mother's killer, as he stood enjoying watching her struggle and the struggle of her fetus as it emerged from her womb.

Rough hands, not gentle and reassuring, snatched away the last vestiges of his sanctuary. He felt himself being lifted, a fleeting sense of hope, then a sickening thud as he was carelessly tossed aside. He was trampled by the feet of the soldiers of the Zionist gang, and his last time in the world, he saw the people of his village in the distance disappearing behind the horizon, pursued by the remnants of the brutal raiders, and the bloody sunset embraced the grief of his father, who had become mad due to the horrific scene of the murder. He kept repeating: "They killed my wife and opened her stomach."

He lay there, a fragile, unwanted thing, his tiny body a testament to the barbarity that had unfolded. In the distance, figures fled, silhouettes against the blood-red sky. His father, a broken shell of a man, his cries echoing across the ravaged landscape.

The fetus tries to press his lips together to ask for help from his father, who is chasing the sunset, fleeing into the distance, but death is urgent, extricating him from the suffocation of his grief and pain, and relieving him the next hell called expulsion from his homeland.

## Leave

In 1948, when the world shifted under their feet, the old man planted his heart like a stubborn olive tree in his homeland. "Here I will grow old, here I will die," he declared, his voice seasoned with resolve. His wife, a woman woven from moonlight and the scent of thyme, echoed his vow, "And I will wither beside you, like a vine clinging to its ancient oak."

Their words were met with laughter, then whispers, then silence as the storm brewed on the horizon. The year 1967 arrived, a cruel wind tearing at their roots. Uprooted, they were forced to walk the path of exile, leaving behind everything but the stories etched in their souls.

The old couple, their bodies frail but their spirits unyielding, refused to be carried. "Leave us!" the grandfather boomed, his voice cracking like dry earth. "Let us nourish the soil with our bones!" But their pleas were lost in the desperate scramble for survival.

As they neared the border, a strange hush fell. The old man's eyes, usually sparkling with defiance, grew dim. His wife, her usual hum replaced by a chilling silence, leaned against him, her hand turning as cold as the desert dawn. When they were mere steps from the line, a single olive leaf, shimmering with an unearthly light, drifted down and settled on the old woman's chest. A gasp escaped her lips, followed by a sigh

that mingled with the rustling leaves of their beloved olive grove.

In that moment, a wave of understanding washed over their children and grandchildren. Their hearts, heavy with grief, understood – the grandparents had chosen their resting place.

Without a word, they turned back, carrying not just the bodies, but the weight of an unfulfilled promise. As they crossed the border, the olive leaf fluttered from the woman's chest, transforming into a flock of doves that soared towards their homeland. It was a silent vow, a promise whispered on the wind – they would return, and the land would remember.

## **Compensation**

He heard a legend called compensation to the people of Gaza for the destruction that befell them. He did not count his financial losses, he did not worry about the large wound in his thigh, and he did not inspect the rubble of his home and the homes of his brothers to count the furniture that had been destroyed or the building that had been leveled to the ground. Rather, he hurried to the sea of Gaza, which he loves. He spent a whole week making statues from sea sand in the form of lost family members

On the morning of the eighth day, he completed making a group of his sand statues, which embody those he lost from his family

He reverently kissed his statues and cried out with remorse. Come compensate me for the loss of them all. Come and bring them back to life. This is my only compensation for their loss.

## **Day of Judgment**

He stands contemplating the Zionist colony that was just established on the remains of his land after it was all confiscated. The old man gripped his gnarled walking stick, the polished wood a stark contrast to the raw, red earth beneath his feet. It wasn't a walking stick, not anymore. It was a piece of his past, a fallen branch from one of the ancient trees that had once graced his land. Now, a metallic city sprawled where his village had been, a monument to conquest built on the bones of his memories.

Tall, sterile buildings marched across his view, each a stark reminder of what had been ripped away. Here and there, crude chimneys exhaled plumes of black smoke, a constant insult to the clear blue sky he'd known all his life. Cement walls, painted a sickly yellow, held within them the bodies of his enemies, literally mortared into the foundations of their victory.

His granddaughter, a small spark of defiance in a world turned cold, tugged at his sleeve. "Grandfather," she whispered, her voice barely a tremor, "There are so many of them."

He glanced down at her, eyes filled with a lifetime of sorrow. "Aye, child," he rasped, his voice rough with unspoken pain. "Let them come. Let them build their towers and monuments. This land," he swept a bony arm across the desecrated

landscape, "This land holds a memory. A memory of resilience, of defiance. In their haste, they've built their own prison. Here, amongst the bones of the past, they'll crowd their way to a hell they themselves have built."

## **Infertility<sup>1</sup>**

He is not the man who was actually born from her dreams, but rather he is the knight masked in the Palestinian keffiyeh who does not accept the Zionist bastard's rule over him and his people, and that is why she married him.

Their marriage was not born of dreams, but of forged steel and shared ideals. She longed for children, not for family bliss, but to continue his struggle. Every month, hope blooms as fragile as the moon, then withers under the harsh whispers of doctors. Infertility, a cruel curse, painted dreams barren.

But a woman woven of moonlight and rebellion, she refused to give up. Every sunrise, she drank the moon dew from an enchanted cup, hoping it would imbue her womb with the magic of resistance. The nightingale sang ancient traditions, whispering about a hidden spring guarded by mythical creatures. She embarked on a dangerous journey, her soul a whirlwind of determination.

She proposed to one of her relatives, to be his second wife who would give him what she was unable to do. She pressed the fires of her jealousy to her chest to contain them silently and secretly, and began to wait for the birth of the little

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<sup>1</sup>- **Infertility**: is the inability of a person to get pregnant after one year of trying to conceive.

Cervical mucus problems: Thick or hostile cervical mucus can make it difficult for sperm to reach the egg.

revolutionaries, even if they were from another woman. Her tears were sharp like daggers of moonlight, threatening to spill, but she swallowed them down, her pride an iron shield. She realized that this woman was not a competitor, but an echo of her longing. They banded together, united not by jealousy, but by a shared love for the Masked Knight and their country.

## Church

The scent of warm spices and anticipation wafted from homes as men, their prayer rugs folded under their arms, they were on their way back to their homes after finishing Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

They knew that their family was waiting for them to have lunch with them, a ritual of family gatherings on Friday lunch.

But a storm brewed on the horizon, unseen, soldiers, their faces twisted with hate, turned the men's path towards the looming silhouette of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which opened its doors, to hide in it.

It is a Palestinian church whose heart is half Christian and the other half Muslim, this church was no stranger to duality, its stained-glass windows whispered stories of both the cross and the crescent moon. Here, faith wasn't a dividing line, but a shared thread. The doors creaked open, a beacon of refuge in the sudden darkness.

The priest, a man of unwavering resolve, stood guard, shielding those who sought sanctuary within, he was determined to protect the Muslims who sought refuge in the Lord there, but the Zionist bullets determined to assassinate them all, these bullets, blind to faith, tore through the sanctuary. They cut down those kneeling, those standing, those united in fear. Blood, the same crimson tide regardless

of belief, pooled on the hallowed floor. In that terrible moment, the church, a testament to a shared humanity, became a tomb where Muslim and Christian became one.

The Zionist soldiers shot everyone who sat or was in the church. Palestinian blood remained united the moment it was shed on the ground, one Palestinian blood in a church that embraces a Muslim and a Christian.

The Zionist soldiers left, the Palestinian martyrs were carried away, and the church remained open to its visitors.

## Medicine

In the city of **Jenin**<sup>1</sup> choked by silence, where shadows stretched long under the curfew moon, lived a boy. Though only five, he carried the weight of the siege upon his small shoulders. His mother, her heart a flickering candle in the wind, needed medicine, a lifeline against the encroaching darkness.

Hunger gnawed at the city, but fear was its sharpest tooth. Zionist Soldiers patrolled the streets, their rifles spitting flames at any who dared defy the iron curtain of night. Yet,

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<sup>1</sup>-**Jenin**: is a Palestinian city located in the northern West Bank, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) west of Nablus. It is the administrative center of the Jenin Governorate and has a population of approximately 40,000 people. Jenin is a historically significant city, dating back to the Canaanite period. It has been ruled by various empires throughout its history, including the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires. In 1948, Jenin was occupied by Israel during the Arab-Israeli War. It was subsequently occupied by Jordan during the Six-Day War in 1967. In 1995, Jenin was transferred to Palestinian control as part of the Oslo Accords. Jenin is an important agricultural center, known for its production of olives, wheat, and vegetables. The city is also home to several universities and colleges, including the Arab American University and the Al-Quds University Jenin Branch. Jenin has been a focal point of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The city was heavily damaged during the Second Intifada, when Israeli forces launched a major military operation in 2002. The operation, known as "Operation Defensive Shield," was aimed at stopping Palestinian militants from carrying out attacks inside Israel. However, it also resulted in the deaths of dozens of Palestinian civilians. Today, Jenin continues to face challenges, including poverty, unemployment. However, the city is also home to a vibrant and resilient community.

his heart a drumbeat of love, could not let fear silence his duty.

He slipped out, a moth drawn to the moonlit pharmacy across the barricaded streets. Each cobblestone whispered danger; each shadow harbored unseen eyes. But he walked, his tiny hand clutching an empty medicine box, a talisman against the night's chill.

His journey was not ordinary. As he walked, the city itself seemed to breathe. Cracks in the pavement glowed with moonlight, revealing veins of gold beneath. The wind carried the whispers of resistance, the echoes of courage from those hidden in its depths. Even the soldiers, their faces shrouded in darkness, seemed to waver, their boots heavy with unspoken doubt.

Three tanks materialized from the haze; their turrets aimed at the lone figure. A booming voice crackled, "Go home, little terrorist!" But he stood his ground, the empty box held high. His voice, small but clear, rang through the silence, "Medicine for my mother, or she will die!"

He takes a bold step on his way without looking back, and the sounds of the Zionist enemy's bullets race to reach him, assassinating his childish determination. All the bullets hit him, and on his second step he collapsed to the ground, his little hand refusing to let go of the empty medicine box.

## **Men**

Fury blazed in the woman's eyes. Ignoring the Zionist soldier's barked commands in Arabic, Contempt burned in the woman's eyes. Arabic barked like a threat went unheard. With the fury of a mother defending her cub, she unleashed a projectile – a shoe aimed squarely at the soldier's chest. The man, revealed as a turncoat by both his accent and cowardly behavior, grimaced and shoved her back with surprising force.

He barked orders for separation, demanding a female soldier conduct the search. A sardonic twist played on the woman's lips. Her gaze, a defiant inferno laced with disgust, met his. "Men?" she spat, the single word a venomous indictment. "Where are the men?"

## **Struggle**

He knows in life one will that resides within him, which is that he wants to liberate Palestine from the Zionists, the "Sons of the Forbidden." Theories and debates held no sway. His battle cry was simple: "Fight until they crawl out like dogs, or die on our soil."

His life was a war song. Marriage, work, dreams - sacrificed on the altar of liberation. He fought, oblivious to the passage of time, until the inevitable commando raid. Soldiers fell, camps crumbled. Yet, as his own demise loomed, a quiet satisfaction played on his lips. "I fought them," he whispered, a victor even in the face of death.

## Special case

Trapped from birth in a silent world, his mind a kaleidoscope of vibrant dreams, he never spoke. He understood little of the world beyond his mother's touch and his younger brother's unwavering devotion. His mother desperately craved that single word, a flicker of connection in the vast landscape of his silence. Doctors became a pilgrimage, each visit echoing with the fading hope of a miracle.

Then, the Zionist bombing rained down. Unforgiving fire engulfed them, stealing the sky and turning his familiar world into a twisted nightmare. Iron, not meant for angels with broken wings, rained down upon his head. He, who held no threat, no value beyond love, became another statistic in the city's brutal tally.

Days turned into a desolate search. His mother, her heart a tattered map leading nowhere, finally found him. A pale figure lost in a sterile hospital bed, the stench of death clinging to him. She held him close, turning his frail body to face her. Tears, a storm within, threatened to drown her. And then, a flicker. A smile, the first she'd ever seen, touched his lips. It was a borrowed word, a shard he'd gathered from the whispers of wounded souls, medics, and concerned visitors "**Palestine**," a single, precious word that shattered the silence of his world. It was the language she'd longed for; it was everything. In that moment, a miracle bloomed in the ruins, a testament to a love that defied even the cruelest silence.

## **His mother's son**

Her pride and joy, a melody incarnate. His voice, a gift passed from mother to son, could coax tears from stone or send shivers down spines with a recitation from the Quran. Yet, this son, sculpted from her own features, held a heart alien to hers.

He was her only solace, a life meticulously nurtured after the cruel hand of fate stole her young husband. Despite their impoverished state, she showered him with a love bordering on indulgence, a fact that earned him the nickname "Mother's Son." His shortcomings, his laziness, his dependence – all were borne with the quiet acceptance of a mother's love. But there was a line, a crimson boundary he dared not cross.

Betrayal. That was the unforgivable sin. How, when, or where it festered remained shrouded, but the evidence was undeniable. Her son, her "Mother's Son," had become a serpent in their midst, a snitch who sold out his own kin, the Fedayeen, to the Zionist soldiers. He was an accomplice to their treacherous slaughter.

The revelation sliced through her heart, a sickening realization. He was a cancer, a threat to the very cause they held dear. This son, so like her yet so different, was a dead branch clinging to a mighty oak, determined to sap its lifeblood.

Love, however, could not cloud her judgment. As painful as it was, the branch had to be severed, even if it bled from her own heart. With a heavy yet resolute spirit, she informed the fighters. Let them claim his head in the mountains, far from her sight, away from the searing image of his silhouette, forever etched with the stain of betrayal.

The night of the execution arrived. After offering her evening prayer, she drifted into a peaceful sleep, a strange sense of serenity washing over her. She had protected her cause, her land, her very soul. In that moment, the spoiled son, the traitor, faded away. All that remained was a mother, finally free from the burden of a son who never truly belonged.

## A smile

His smile was an enigma, a map etched into his face by life's journey. Each wrinkle, each crease, spoke of battles fought and won, scars hidden beneath the surface. The smile itself, though constant, held a thousand shades. Sometimes, it was a warm hearth, inviting others in. Sometimes, it was a stoic wall, guarding secrets too painful to share. His life, like his smile, was a tapestry woven from sorrow and joy, darkness and light

The smile never left him throughout his life, and the muscles of his face shrank into a wide smile capable of swallowing the greatest sadness, pain, deprivation, and disappointment.

His smile was able to swallow the memory of the scenes of genocide in the **Sabra and Shatila camp** - and to bury his tears deep inside himself as he saw the burned remains of his family rotting in the streets of the camp and being trampled by the occupation forces boldly and shamelessly. His smile prevents tender hands from caressing his orphan and begging him for kindness. This smile also cast doubt on his seriousness and discipline when he applied as a volunteer to join the ranks of the guerrillas, but in the end, it became his distinctive mark, as he refused to let anyone see a tear in the eyes of the Palestinians.

Now his smile appears even bigger as he chases death and reaches for the fuse of the explosive belt to wipe the face of

the earth in this night disco, crowded to the point of vomiting with Zionist soldiers who, a few days ago, were storming annihilation into a school for Palestinian children in the **Gaza Strip**<sup>1</sup>. His smile widened further, the fuse tightened, and his death gasps increased. The smile of satisfaction did not leave him.

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<sup>1</sup>- **The Gaza Strip:** or simply Gaza, is a polity and the smaller of the two Palestinian territories (the other being the West Bank). On the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Gaza is bordered by Egypt on the southwest and Israel on the east and north.

The territory came into being when it was controlled by Egypt during the 1948 Arab–Israeli war, and became a refuge for Palestinians who fled or were expelled during the 1948 Palestine war. Later, during the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel captured and occupied the Gaza Strip, initiating its decades-long military occupation of the Palestinian territories. The mid-1990s Oslo Accords established the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a limited governing authority, initially led by the secular party Fatah until that party's electoral defeat in 2006 to the Sunni Islamic Hamas. Hamas would then take over the governance of Gaza in a battle the next year, subsequently warring with Israel. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza\\_Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_Strip)

## **Mountains**

The barren peaks, silent witnesses to millennia, trembled with a newfound fury. Below, their vision blurred by the veil of night, ran the invaders, drawn by the promise of unclaimed land. The distant, barren mountains see the Zionist colonists running towards them. They are unaware of its people, who live in the foothills, cities, villages, and coasts, to lay their hands on it. The mountains alone, towards which see them running in the cover of night, decide that only their Palestinian people will stand on their peaks, the mountains held secrets, held the pulse of their people, woven into every crevice and crag. As the enemy's machines dared to defile their slopes, a tremor rumbled through the earth, a primal cry echoed across the heavens. "Hearers of the sound!" it boomed, a language older than time, understood by hearts attuned to the rhythm of the land.

From slumbering villages, nestled in the foothills and clinging to coasts, arose the people, children, elders, warriors – a tapestry of souls united by the mountain's call. With possessions bundled tight and families nestled close, they climbed, their ascent echoing the mountain's defiance. Their ascent was a pilgrimage, a reclaiming of what was rightfully theirs, they rush to live on the mountaintops before the Zionist invaders seize them, and leave the rest of their families in their original homes.

Silence descended, profound and heavy. The mountains, once again, stood bathed in moonlight, their people secure in their embrace. The invaders were gone, leaving behind only the echo of their failed ambition and a reminder: the mountains belonged to those who heard their call, who understood their language, who were, in essence, part of their very being.

## **Betrayal**

The coin felt alien against his calloused fingers, a foreign chill against the familiar heat of betrayal. It was heavier than expected, denser than the weight that had settled in his gut. He turned it over, the image of the king mocking him with its cold, uncaring stare. A metallic tang, sharp and acrid, filled his nostrils. It wasn't the scent of riches he'd imagined, but something akin to blood. A metallic hunger gnawed at him, a hunger that had nothing to do with his empty stomach

The price of betrayal held no sway over him. Hours crawled by; a nail driven into his imminent fiery demise. The familiar weight of coin in his pocket went unheeded. Fear of exposure, a gnawing companion for others, found no purchase in his soul. He had tasted blood before, the blood of traitors, and now the cup was about to be turned on him.

Death, however, held no allure. Not the ignominy of a whimpering execution, throat slashed, unmourned, left to fester in the open. Not the grotesque tableau of a body swaying from an olive branch, a macabre feast for carrion.

With a death he'd sculpted for himself still fresh in his throat, he craved a defiant twist of fate. The world, all its worlds, snarled its disapproval, but a flicker of rebellion ignited within him. His mother, barely buried a few days past, burned with a righteous fury he couldn't face. A traitor's stain, a coward's brand – he couldn't touch her coffin, couldn't walk

beside her on that final journey. Shame gnawed at him; a constant witness as hunted eyes mirrored his betrayal. The Fedayeen, Palestinian ghosts with vengeance in their sights, lusted for his head, a cheap price for the havoc he'd wrought.

The Zionist soldier, a ghost in familiar enemy garb, strolled into the camp. Dust devils danced on the horizon, mirroring the turmoil within him. This wasn't his first infiltration, nor his first lie. Today, however, the lie carried the weight of a mountain.

A gaggle of soldiers awaited him, their faces etched with the routine of another briefing. The Zionist officer, a practiced deceiver himself, would soon unveil his "new intel" – a meticulously crafted web to lure them all into oblivion. Beneath the soldier's tattered uniform, a concealed inferno pulsed – an explosive belt, his twisted penance.

The moment arrived, heavy and final. With a silent apology to the sky, he detonated the minefield he wore. A searing inferno consumed him, washing away the sins that gnawed at his soul. In that fiery baptism, he became a martyr, or perhaps a traitor. History wouldn't judge, wouldn't understand.

Only his mother, a celestial witness, would know the truth. Her ethereal smile, a beacon in the chaos, would forever mark his final act as one of redemption.

## Engagement

Every suitor presented to her, was a pale imitation. They held themselves with an awkward gait, their voices lacked warmth, their eyes held no spark that mirrored Hassan's. Her family watched; their faces etched with worry as she politely dismissed each man.

Hassan. His laughter, the strength in his embrace, the way his love for Palestine mirrored her own - these were ghosts that lingered, refusing to be replaced. Days bled into weeks, then months, each rejection a fresh wound.

"He's gone, " her mother pleaded, her voice strained. "You can't spend your life searching for a ghost."

But she couldn't, wouldn't let go. Hassan's face, etched in her memory, became the only standard against which she measured every hopeful heart. Tonight, another one would arrive. She steeled herself, a warrior clad in grief.

Her gaze fell upon her parents, their shoulders slumped with the weight of her sorrow. A tremor ran through her as she looked at Hassan's picture, a silent promise hanging heavy in the air.

"I won't betray you," she whispered, her voice thick with emotion. "Even after all this time, my heart remains yours."

## **planting**

They bulldozed her land after burning her crops this year. They released wild pigs on the vineyards, and in the end, dried up the well that sustained her farm. She, the only Palestinian left among them, felt utterly alone. Bullied by those who now controlled the farms surrounding hers, farms confiscated from her people. They had taken everything.

But solitude did not breed despair. With a heart ablaze, she replanted the seeds of defiance. The very corn they tore from her grasp, she sowed anew. Miraculously, each kernel sprouted not grain, but a defender - Palestinian farmers, their faces etched with determination, rising from the earth to stand beside her. The land, once plundered, now echoed with the rhythmic dance of hoe and shovel, a symphony of resilience.

## Alzheimer's disease<sup>1</sup>

Sixty years of continuous struggle could not shake him from his deep belief in his right. Not a single night passed without him struggling to cling to his land. He did not lose his resolve. The whole world conspired with its Zionist enemy. As for this dreaded disease called - Alzheimer's - it is the one who fears that it will eat away at his memory and does not remember the borders of his land. Its area and the number and type of trees planted there are not known, so he cannot continue to pursue the cases he filed against the Zionist settlers who imposed forceful oppression and tyranny on the northern parts of his land. Is Alzheimer's a Zionist disease

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<sup>1</sup>- **Alzheimer's disease** is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects millions of people worldwide. It slowly destroys brain cells, leading to memory loss, cognitive decline, and eventually, death. While there is no cure for Alzheimer's, there are treatments that can manage symptoms and slow the progression of the disease. **Memory loss:** This is the most common and well-known symptom of Alzheimer's. People with Alzheimer's may forget recent events, repeat questions, or have difficulty finding familiar words. **Cognitive decline:** People with Alzheimer's may also experience difficulty with problem-solving, decision-making, and planning. They may have trouble paying attention or following instructions. **Behavioral changes:** Alzheimer's can also cause changes in mood and personality. People with Alzheimer's may become withdrawn, anxious, or depressed. They may also have difficulty controlling their impulses or lash out in anger. **Early stage:** In the early stage of Alzheimer's, symptoms may be mild and go unnoticed. People may forget names or have trouble finding words, but they are still able to live independently. Sources [www.scribd.com/document/533118718/Ncm-114-Midterm-Module-Content](https://www.scribd.com/document/533118718/Ncm-114-Midterm-Module-Content)

that will eat away at his memory as it has eaten the memories of many people before?

He decides that the best way to attack is to defend. He begins to record in a large notebook every little thing that he wants to remember about his land, his homeland, his struggle, and his enemy. He is lurking around his dreaded disease, and has provided him with the necessary tools to overcome it.

## **Eid pants**

The boy stomped his foot, a stubborn glint in his eye. "Black linen pants for Eid!" he declared, leaving no room for discussion. His mother, caught between his demands and her husband's weary eyes, chimed in, "He's just a child. Eid clothes are for little ones like him."

His father, burdened by unseen troubles, could only nod. He'd work the extra shift, pick those cursed crops, just to fulfill this small wish. But this time, something was different. The boy insisted on tagging along.

The journey to the fields was an eye-opener. Checkpoints, barbed wire, and a gnawing emptiness replaced the familiar warmth of their village. His father, once a towering figure, seemed to shrink under the weight of their stolen land. The work was relentless, a harsh reminder of their forced servitude.

As the day wore on, exhaustion etched lines on his father's face. Yet, there was no rest for the weary. Shame, a new and unfamiliar feeling, bloomed in the boy's chest. He watched, his heart heavy, a silent apology forming on his lips.

Evening brought the market's familiar bustle. The boy, his voice barely a whisper, touched his father's calloused hand. "No more work, I don't need the pants anymore. I've grown up, and grown-ups don't need new clothes for Eid."

## Stone

Dibo Habibi, that's the name the little boy gave to his father. Even at the age of seventeen, Diab carried the weight of a husband, father, and support for his son and widowed mother. But in his son's eyes, Diab was not burdened, but rather a hero. Like everyone else in the village, he saw magic in his young father.

He was sitting on Diab's broad shoulders, laughing as the world changed beneath him. The houses became castles, the streets turned into rivers, and Diab was his mighty horse. With every strong step, Diab gently rocked him, in a calm rhythm whispering tales of courage and love. In those moments, he was not a boy in a war-torn village; He was a prince on a magical dragon, flying in a world where his father, Dibo Habibi, could conquer anything

The boy burned with envy. Every day, his father would return from the skirmishes, his weathered face etched with exhaustion, a single stone clutched in his hand. He wouldn't let the boy carry it, wouldn't let him join the fight against the Zionist soldiers who dared trespass on their land. The boy dreamt of being big enough, strong enough, to join his father in the endless dance of hurling stones, delaying the enemy, giving the guerrillas a sliver of a chance.

Dibo Habibi, his love, was supposed to wait. They were to throw stones together, side by side. But war had its own cruel timetable. Dibo was brought back one day, not throwing stones, but carried upon them, a victim of an unseen sniper's bullet. A chilling smile touched the boy's lips as he saw the lone stone clutched in his father's hand. It was a grim promise: whoever stole their land would be stoned.

Fueled by grief and a burning sense of purpose, the boy sprang to action. With nimble fingers, he snatched the stone from his father's grasp, a silent oath replacing the whispered endearment that died on his tongue. "Dibo, my love," he murmured, his voice thick with unshed tears, "You have grown up. Tomorrow, I will go out to stone this enemy."

## Olive

The scent of olives hung heavy in the air as the older brother crouched beside his younger sibling. They stood beneath the sprawling boughs of an ancient olive tree, its gnarled branches casting dappled shadows on the Palestinian mountains of Gerizim<sup>1</sup>. The older brother spoke, his voice

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<sup>1</sup>- **Mount Gerizim:** (/ˈɡɛrɪzɪm/; Samaritan Hebrew: ʾĀrgāzēm; Hebrew: הר גֵרִיזִים Har Gəřizīm; Arabic: Jabal Jarizīm or Jabal at-Ṭūr) is one of two mountains in the immediate vicinity of the Palestinian city of Nablus and the biblical city of Shechem. It forms the southern side of the valley in which Nablus is situated, the northern side being formed by Mount Ebal. The mountain is one of the highest peaks in the West Bank and rises to 881 m (2,890 ft) above sea level, 70 m (230 ft) lower than Mount Ebal. The mountain is particularly steep on the northern side, is sparsely covered at the top with shrubbery, and lower down there is a spring with a high yield of fresh water. For the Samaritan people, most of whom live around it, Mount Gerizim is considered the holiest place on Earth.

The mountain is mentioned in the Bible as the place where, upon first entering the Promised Land after the Exodus, the Israelites performed ceremonies of blessings, as they had been instructed by Moses.

Mount Gerizim is sacred to the Samaritans, who regard it, rather than Jerusalem's Temple Mount, as the location chosen by God for a holy temple. In Samaritan tradition, it is the oldest and most central mountain in the world, towering above the Great Flood and providing the first land for Noah's disembarkation. It is also the location where Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac. Jews, on the other hand, consider the location of the near-sacrifice to be Mount Moriah, traditionally identified by them with the Temple Mount. Mount Gerizim continues to be the centre of Samaritan religion to this day, and Samaritans ascend it three times a year: at Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. Passover is still celebrated by the Samaritans with a lamb sacrifice on Mount Gerizim. Today, about half of the remaining Samaritans live in close proximity to Gerizim, mostly in the small village of Kiryat Luza.

The Samaritan village of Kiryat Luza and an Israeli settlement, Har Brakha, are situated on the ridge of Mount Gerizim

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Gerizim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Gerizim)

hushed with reverence, "These trees, they hold more than olives, little one."

The younger brother tilted his head, his brow furrowed in curiosity. The grove had always been a familiar haven, a place of laughter and play. But now, his brother's words cast a new light upon it.

The older brother continued, his gaze sweeping across the seemingly endless rows of trees, "Every one of these, it grows on a special kind of ground. A place of redemption." He paused, letting the weight of his words sink in. "Each guerrilla, when their fight is done, becomes one with the earth, and from their sacrifice, a new life emerges – an olive tree."

A gasp escaped the younger brother's lips. He darted a glance around the grove, his eyes widening as he saw the countless trees stretching out before him. Realization dawned – their cherished orchard wasn't just a source of life, it was a vast, silent cemetery. But instead of fear, a surge of pride filled his chest. He was entrusted with the care of not just trees, but the final resting places of heroes.

"So, the olive tree," he whispered, his voice filled with newfound respect, "it's sacred. Not just a symbol of peace, but a symbol of the Palestinian fighters too."

## Tree

As the bulldozers retreated, defeated by the tree's stubborn resistance, Hajja Fariza, the old woman emerged from the dust. Her eyes, though filled with grief, held a spark of defiance. She approached the wounded giant, her weathered hands trembling

From her head covering, she unfurled a white veil, shimmering with the moonlight it had absorbed over the years. With reverence, she bound the severed branches, whispering ancient words of healing and strength. The veil, imbued with the prayers of countless ancestors, pulsed with a soft, emerald light.

The earth itself seemed to respond. Stones, nudged by unseen forces, formed a barrier around the tree's exposed roots, shielding them from further harm. The air crackled with a strange energy, and the whispers of the wind carried the message: "This tree shall not be felled."

News of the "Cursed Tree" spread like wildfire. The bulldozers, their metallic hearts filled with fear, dared not return. The few who ventured close felt an invisible hand push them back, a silent warning to respect the land and its spirits.

## **New baby**

Life and death wrestled on the unforgiving asphalt. The woman, wracked with pain, gave birth not in a sterile room, but on the harsh crossroads of war. Her cries for help were drowned by the rattle of gunfire. The Zionist soldiers, arbiters of cruelty, separated her from her husband. He, defiant even in the face of death, refused their humiliation. Bullets found him, stealing his breath in a crimson symphony.

Their child, a wailing testament to resilience, arrived amidst the carnage. The grandmother, eyes steeled with grief, received them both. Her washcloth, meant for a newborn's innocence, cleaned the blood of war from his tiny body. The coffin, intended for a loving farewell, cradled his father instead. Tears were absent, replaced by a resolute smile – the unwavering pride of a mother who birthed a martyr.

## **Deafness**

The world had always been a silent symphony for him, a canvas painted in vibrations and gestures. Deafness, a cruel souvenir of childhood sunstroke, had kept him in a world of hushed beauty. The cacophony of the streets, the shouts of strangers – they were all a distant melody he didn't yearn for.

But his heart yearned for one sound – the voice of his son, a melody unlike any other. His son, blessed with a voice that echoed the serenity of the Quran, a voice he longed to hear even once. Deafness, however, stood as an unyielding wall between him and this cherished desire.

Then, the earth shuddered. A deafening explosion ripped through the courtyard, a monstrous scream tearing through the fabric of his quiet world. In that instant, a terrible truth pierced him deeper than any sound ever could. His eardrums shattered, the world a cacophony of ringing and screams. He could hear. But the first sound that assaulted his newfound hearing was the choked cry announcing his son's death – his son, the angelic voice he'd so desperately wished to hear, silenced forever.

## **Fishing**

The sea is accustomed to their words, their hymns, their dreams, and the rituals of fishing, eating, buying, and selling that unfold along its shores. Even their supplications in moments of turmoil delight it, for the sea finds a strange amusement in their pleas for its bounty. For thousands of years, the sea has held these inhabitants of the Palestinian coast in its heart. An alliance of love has bound them since time immemorial, and forevermore it shall remain.

The sea remembers the details of their suffering. When he thwarts the Zionist fishermen, a current of sadness and grief stirs its depths, sending a frothy green foam rippling across its surface.

The sea holds treasures for its Palestinian fishing friends: stories whispered in the waves, pearls hidden in the sand, a gentle caress of the tide, and an abundance of fish. It listens intently to their songs, a melody that tickles its vast soul.

Now, a heavy loneliness weighs on the sea. It sees the Palestinian fishermen unable to reach its depths, their faith shaken. The sea clutches their abandoned ships, a giant rock on its chest, and sinks deeper into its watery solitude.

This morning, the sea witnessed an attack on its waves. It saw those who sought to steal the fishermen's vessels. Rage

swelled within the sea. It lifted the ships onto the highest peaks of its waves, towering over the attackers. In its fury, the sea transformed them back into simple creatures, monkeys and porpoises. Now, they must search the depths for scraps, food for the very fish they sought to steal.

The sea chuckles softly, anchoring the fishermen's ships in a sheltered bay along the coast. It waits for its friends, the fishermen, with their songs of the sea and the bounty it offers.

## **Leader**

The dusty alleyways of the camp echo with the younger brother's enthusiastic steps, mirroring his older brother's confident stride. Every cough, every laugh, every muttered curse is meticulously mimicked, a silent performance yearning for applause. The younger brother seeks not just approval, but a reflection of himself in his brother's eyes, a confirmation that he's on the right path. Here, in the heart of the camp, the older brother isn't just family, he's the sun, and the younger brother a sunflower, forever turning his face to soak in the warmth of his admiration.

He ordered him to stone the Zionist soldiers because they were evil, and he did not delay a single moment in carrying out his orders. Whenever a Zionist was stoned, his eyes sparkled with pride because he obeyed his brother - Abdullah - his supreme leader in life.

He almost took the spoils of stoning by the Zionists and ran away as usual, but a giant, hairy hand crushed his shoulder when it caught him, and in the blink of an eye, the soldiers handcuffed him and ordered him to confess the name of the one who incited him to stone them. He did not evade their answer, and said with wide, excited, childish pride: "Brother, who ordered me to do this?"

Angry soldiers and armored vehicles moved to dig their nails into the neck of the terrorist Abdullah, as they called him.

They surrounded his house and ordered him, through loudspeakers, to come out to them surrendering, raising his hands, to protect the life of his younger brother, who had their satanic nails stuck in his neck, and to protect his house, which they would blow up without hesitation. After thirty seconds, he would come out to them surrendering, raising his hands, with the fingers of his right hand holding a lollipop. He was afraid it would fall to the ground.

Finally, the Zionist army arrested the Supreme Leader of the Resistance. His name is Abdullah. He is seven years old, wearing childish pants and a pacifier!

## **Band aid**

It is a night like all Palestinian nights under Zionist bombing. It is a lonely and frightening night that the people of the city live under a flood of fire, iron, siege, and suffocation.

Hashem Abu Al-Khair The paramedic is determined to transport the injured, accompanied by his nursing staff, despite the impossibility of continuing to do so under the barrage of hellish fire that showers them with death, fire, and fear.

The barrage quickly consumed his crew, leaving him with nothing but his resolve .A powerful shell tore off his head from above his body. The head flew away, not caring about the pain of rolling on burning gravel. As for the body, it continued to drive the ambulance with determination and courage to deliver the injured to the nearest Palestinian hospital.

## **The brothers**

He used to recite Surah Al-Mulk to himself whenever he went out riding his resolve, showing off his pride, carrying his rifle, freeing his soul, despising life

This morning he read to himself the scrolls of the curse, and cursed everyone who pushed him to take up arms against his Palestinian brother. He does not understand politics and hates it intensely. A bitter taste lingered in his mouth, mirroring the ink-stained curses he'd scrawled on ancient parchment. Those who'd prodded him towards fratricide had ignited a firestorm of disgust within him. Politics? A playground for vipers, a game he loathed. He wouldn't be their pawn. Disobeying orders was a start, but not enough. He retreated, a fortress within his own walls. Weapons vanished, bullets scattered, a silent scream against the slaughter that mocked his humanity, and isolated himself in his home and hid his weapons and bullets to fight one enemy he knew well.

## **Fatherhood**

His heart, a canvas once painted with dreams of fatherhood, was now a mosaic of shattered hopes. Each failed attempt at insemination chipped away a piece, leaving a hollowness that mirrored the growing despair in his wife's eyes. Yet, hand in hand, they persevered, clinging fiercely to the dream of a child – a symbol of their unwavering love.

Azza, his wife, embodied the unwavering spirit of their homeland. Motherhood wasn't just a desire, it was a birthright, a legacy passed down through generations. She dreamt of experiencing the raw, primal joy of childbirth, the struggles that forge an unbreakable bond between mother and child.

He poured every ounce of their earnings into the desperate hope of insemination, each failed cycle a heavy blow to their chests. Azza yearned to nurture a life within her, to experience the profound connection shared by countless women before her.

The dream of parenthood flickered on in him, even as Azza saved every penny for another try. But fate, it seemed, held a cruel hand. The air strike that ripped Azza from him also stole their unborn child, a martyr before their first breath.

He never felt the warmth of a tiny hand in his, never heard the sweet symphony of a newborn's cry. The word "daddy" remained forever unspoken, a haunting echo in the man who ached to be a father.

Azza was gone, leaving a deafening silence where their shared dream once resided. The school, a place of learning, became a tomb in an instant. The enemy's bomb claimed not just his wife, but their future child, a life snuffed out before it could bloom.

He buried her with a love unspoken, a dream unfulfilled. But amidst the crushing grief, a sliver of hope emerged. Tucked away in her purse, a pregnancy test, a silent testament to a life blossoming within her. The date scrawled on the box – the day she became a martyr. Perhaps she meant to tell him, to share the joy the moment she walked through the door.

Now, he was a father, not in the way he envisioned, but a father nonetheless. His child, a martyr, a symbol of their unwavering love, a testament to the enduring power of a dream, even in the face of unimaginable loss. He stood alone, yet carried the weight of their love, a silent promise etched onto his soul.

## **Family tree**

The mathematics teacher assigned her young students to draw a family tree as homework so that they would know mathematics

In practical terms, it means generation and branching.

The little girl, with the help of her loving family – her mother, grandmother, her uncle's wife, and her aunt – all living together since the occupation forced them from their homes, created a magnificent family tree. Her uncles, the protectors who were no more, were prominent figures on her canvas.

On the second day, she arrived at school, bursting with pride. Her tree, sprawling with heroes, martyrs, and those held captive, was unlike any other. It was a testament to her family's sacrifices, a story of resilience etched in branches.

But her pride was short-lived. As she looked around, she saw similar trees – vast, intricate, and overflowing with stories of struggle. The realization dawned – her family's experience, though unique, wasn't isolated. It was a shared narrative, a communal tapestry woven with threads of loss and resistance.

Undeterred, she settled back in her seat. With a sharpened pencil, she began to extend the branches even further. With care and determination, she filled them with the names of the daughters she dreamt of having, daughters who would carry on the legacy of sacrifice and fight for a brighter future. Her family tree, though not the only one, would stand as a symbol of their unwavering spirit.

## **Martyr**

Her life was a tapestry woven with threads of sacrifice, sorrow, and unwavering love. Seventeen young faces, each bearing the scars of war, surrounded her. They were her children, not by blood, but by the unwavering bond forged in the crucible of loss. Each one, orphaned by a martyr father, a detained sister, or a home reduced to rubble by the enemy, found solace in her embrace.

Ramzi, however, was different. He was a part of her, a living testament to her beloved husband, a man forever lost but ever-present in her heart. Whispers spoke of him being alive, yet she knew his true home lay beneath the earth, his sacrifice etched in the fabric of their nation.

Ramzi, his father's namesake, embodied the same courage, kindness, and unwavering love for their land. Driven by the pain of his community, he embarked on a mission of vengeance, vowing to avenge the senseless death of five innocent children. He left, a single tear tracing a path down his cheek, the weight of his mother's unspoken love heavy on his shoulders.

Days bled into weeks, the silence growing deafening. Then, one day, the enemy returned, bearing a chilling message. Ramzi lay lifeless in a black plastic bag, a pawn in their

twisted game of revenge. They paraded him through the streets, hoping to incite fear and ignite a cycle of violence.

One by one, the women of the neighborhood, their hearts heavy with grief and defiance, denied knowing him. They stood as a wall, shielding each other from the storm of retaliation.

Finally, they reached Ramzi's house. His mother, her face etched with a lifetime of hardship, stood tall. As they presented the bag, her stomach clenched, but her voice remained steady. With a pride that refused to be broken, she declared, "I have never seen him before. He is not my son."

Her lie, a shield forged in love, resonated through the neighborhood. It was a silent rebellion, a testament to the unyielding spirit of a mother who had lost everything yet refused to lose hope. In that moment, she became not just a mother, but a symbol of resilience, a beacon of defiance in the face of unimaginable cruelty.

## Mermaid

Since childhood, Houria felt an inexplicable pull towards the sea. It wasn't just the cool embrace of the waves, but a sense of belonging, a whispered conversation between her and the vast ocean depths. She believed herself a descendant of mermaids, a lineage whispered in her name - Houria, like her grandmother. To her friends, she spun tales of underwater kingdoms, her voice, rich and deep like the ocean itself, weaving fantastical stories for their amusement.

One fateful summer night, the tranquility shattered. Enemy planes rained terror upon her land, bombs raining destruction on her neighborhood. Separated from her beloved sea, Houria found herself trapped amidst the chaos. Debris choked the streets, blocking her path back. Fear, a primal instinct, urged her towards the familiar embrace of the ocean.

Ignoring the searing pain from shrapnel wounds, she ran, a fragile bird caught in a storm. The deafening roar of planes chased her, each explosion a tremor through the earth. Finally, she reached the shore, the once-calm sea now churned by the aerial assault.

But before she could find solace, a final, brutal blow struck. A stray shell ripped through her, shattering her form. Yet, amidst the pain, there was peace. Her spirit, like seafoam, rose and mingled with the ocean breeze. The waves, her

cradle since childhood, gently claimed the remnants, carrying them deep into the heart of the sea.

Houria, the mermaid who never was, yet forever belonged to the ocean, became a silent guardian in its depths. Her voice, though silenced, echoed in the whispers of the waves, a haunting melody reminding all who dared to listen of the beauty lost and the love that endured even in the face of destruction.

## wall

The towering wall sliced through his world, a cruel barrier separating him from the familiar halls of his beloved school. His father, helpless in the face of this concrete divide, transferred him to another school, but it held no meaning. His heart remained tethered to the teachers, friends, and memories that resided on the other side. This dividing wall deprived him of the school he love,

Each day, he'd rise with the sun, clutching his worn books, a determined glint in his eyes. He'd walk towards the wall, the oppressive symbol of division, his tiny figure dwarfed by its imposing presence.

He'd plead, he'd shout, he'd beg for passage, his voice echoing in the sterile silence. But the response was always the same - a cold, unyielding wall and the watchful gaze of armed soldiers. When he despaired of hearing any response from it, he decided to storm the separation wall. The Zionist soldiers pushed him away from the crossing gate. Armed with weapons and dogs, he refuses to move away from the gate. One day, desperation gnawed at him. He wouldn't be denied. With a surge of defiance, he lunged towards the gate, his small frame a stark contrast to the soldiers' imposing figures. They shoved him back, their voices harsh, their weapons glinting menacingly.

But he wouldn't be deterred. He stood his ground, a lone figure against the tide of oppression. The soldiers, their patience exhausted, unleashed their savage dogs. The beasts, trained for violence, tore into him, their snarls and his screams mingling in the air; the soldiers released their rabid dogs on him to eat his flesh without mercy. The dogs cut his flesh with their unclean fangs. Thus, life leaves him among the pieces of his flesh scattered on the ground. He still dreams of crossing the checkpoint gate to go to his school, which he loves.

He fell, his dreams of crossing the gate shattered along with his body. His life, once filled with the promise of learning and laughter, lay scattered amidst the dust, a silent testament to the cruelty of the wall.

Yet, even in his death, a spark remained. His story, whispered by the wind, became a beacon of hope, a reminder of the unwavering spirit that dared to dream, even in the face of insurmountable odds. The wall may have claimed his life, but it could never extinguish the flame of his desire for knowledge and the yearning for a world without division. He became a symbol, a silent plea for a future where children wouldn't have to dream of crossing walls, but could simply walk-through open doors, their hearts filled with the joy of learning and the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

## **A Palestinian myth**

The old woman, etched like a weathered willow by the harsh winds of time, clung to a memory spun from love's softest thread and the barbed wire of loss. Abu Al-Hassan, her husband, had vanished like a wisp of smoke on a battlefield choked with dust and despair.

Refusing to drown in the bitter sea of grief, she wove a tapestry of words for her children and grandchildren. It was a shield, a bulwark against the brutal realities of war and the ache of displacement. Each night, beneath a canopy of stars, she would weave a tale - not of a man lost, but of a warrior.

Abu Al-Hassan, in her stories, wasn't a man who faded into oblivion. He was a legend, a knight forever galloping across the plains of justice, his absence a mere pause in his valiant quest. Her children, young and vulnerable, clung to this melody, finding solace in the promise of his triumphant return.

Years bled into decades, the myth a constant companion. They grew up, facing hardships with the unwavering belief that Abu Al-Hassan would ride back, his arrival heralding a dawn of peace and prosperity.

Then, one day, a white cloth sack arrived, a grim echo of a faded dream. Inside, a jumble of bones – all that remained of Abu Al-Hassan. The news struck them like a physical blow.

The myth, their anchor for so long, seemed to crumble at their feet.

Yet, as they laid him to rest, a new understanding bloomed within them. Abu Al-Hassan, though physically gone, had lived on in their hearts, his spirit a whisper in the wind, guiding their steps. The myth, born from unwavering love, became a testament to their enduring hope, a song of family love that refused to be silenced.

That night, gathered around their grandmother, they listened. This time, not to a fantastical tale, but to the true story of Abu Al-Hassan, a man who loved fiercely and left behind a legacy of resilience. The myth had served its purpose, and now, they were ready to face the future, carrying the torch of hope he had unknowingly ignited.

## **virgin**

Fairy-tale love stories no longer held sway. Her heart ached for a simpler dream: a window view of Al-Aqsa Mosque's golden domes, the call to prayer echoing in her ears. In Jerusalem, her birthplace, her love for family and city ran deeper than any yearning for a husband.

Finding love within the city walls proved impossible. To venture outside was to risk losing her residency – a cruel twist that turned Jerusalem into a gilded cage for its Arab residents. One fleeting trip abroad sparked a love affair with a Palestinian man. Yet, to return to her beloved city, she had to sever the budding connection. Marriage was out of the question; her residency wouldn't extend to him.

He left, heartbroken. Time marched on, stealing away her youth and dreams. But one thing remained: the unwavering love for Jerusalem, a love so profound it eclipsed the yearning for a romantic partner. The city held her captive, not with bars and locks, but with the invisible threads of belonging. Here, she would stay, even if it meant forever sacrificing the embrace of a dream lover.

## **vote**

The Zionist bombing has been going on for many days, more than a month and a half, and she and her children are starving, just as all the people of Gaza are starving because of this bombing that is besieging them. The rumble of distant explosions had become a constant in their lives, bombs had rained down on their city, turning streets into battlegrounds and shops into empty shells. Hunger gnawed at their bellies, especially during this holy month of Ramadan, a time that should have been filled with feasts and family.

A mother, her eyes etched with worry lines, looked at her four children. Her eldest, barely thirteen, mirrored her concern. A fragile two-hour truce had been announced, their only chance to scavenge for food.

"I'll go," the boy said, his voice small but resolute. "I'm faster, and if something happens..." He couldn't finish the sentence, the thought of leaving his mother and siblings unbearable.

The mother squeezed his hand. "No, my love. It's too dangerous."

A silent battle raged between them. Her motherly instinct screamed to protect her children, but the thought of him facing the dangers outside terrified her even more.

Suddenly, a mischievous glint sparked in the youngest child's eyes. "Let's vote!" she declared.

Intrigued, the mother and son agreed. They each scribbled their names on scraps of paper, the tension thick in the air as they folded them identically. With bated breath, they watched their youngest daughter pick one.

Unfolding the paper, the mother's heart lurched. It was her son's name. But before his face could fall, she did something unexpected.

With a wink, she crumpled the paper, a mischievous smile replacing her worry. "Looks like it's lentil soup for everyone tonight!"

## **Love story**

childhood friends, shared a love as deep and enduring as the roots of the ancient olive trees that graced his family farm. They dreamt of a future intertwined, their love story woven into the fabric of the land they cherished. Beneath the shade of their favorite tree, they carved their initials and a promise: "Forever bound by love and soil."

Their wedding bells were to chime next autumn, a joyous melody echoing through the olive groves. But fate, a cruel wind, swept through their dreams. One morning, the familiar landscape was marred by bulldozers, uprooting the ancient trees, their leaves scattering like fallen tears. The land, their legacy, was being devoured for a new settlement, a symbol of displacement.

Grief threatened to consume them, but their love, like a stubborn wildflower, bloomed even amidst the devastation. They clung to each other, their love a beacon in the encroaching darkness. They decided to fight, they decided, in a moment of complete love, to walk the path of their greatest love with two explosive pieces. They blew up the destroyed homes outside their land and the strangers in it, and spread holy dust on their land, which they died in love with.

## Two Feet

The midday sun beat down on the bustling streets of Nablus as he navigated the uneven cobblestones. The rhythmic click-clack of his wooden legs echoed through the air, a constant reminder of the sacrifice he had made. He wasn't the same one who had joined the student sit-in months ago, full of youthful vigor and dreams of a brighter future. The Zionist enemy bullets had taken his feet that day, leaving him with phantom echoes of pain and a future seemingly devoid of the normalcy he once craved.

University life, once a vibrant tapestry woven with lectures, debates, and stolen glances at his childhood sweetheart, Bahia, was now a distant memory. The thought of returning to his studies, confined to a wheelchair, filled him with a suffocating sense of inadequacy. He couldn't bear the thought of Bahia's eyes holding pity instead of the spark of love he had always cherished. So, he made a decision that tore at his heart – he refused her. He couldn't bear the thought of her sacrificing her dreams for him, burdened by a future filled with limitations.

But he was not one to surrender. Despair was a luxury he couldn't afford. He channeled his grief and frustration into creation. For months, the rhythmic hammering and sawing resonated from his small workshop, a symphony of determination. Finally, the day arrived, with a triumphant grin, strapped on his meticulously crafted wooden legs, the polished wood gleaming in the sunlight.

He went to Al-Aqsa Mosque to participate, once again, in the sit-in protest against its desecration by the Zionist enemy.

## **Fantasy movie**

The flickering television cast an uneven glow on the faces huddled. A tapestry of scavenged sheets draped the doorway, and the air hung thick with the scent of dust and stale bread. Five pairs of eyes, wide and hungry, were mesmerized by the vibrant world on the screen – a world far removed from their own.

There, children, dressed in clothes the color of forgotten dreams, skipped through bustling streets. Laughter filled the air, a sound so foreign it felt like a forgotten melody. The markets overflowed with food, a luxury their bellies ached for. This world pulsed with life, a stark contrast to the muted tones and harsh realities of their daily existence.

A small voice, barely a whisper, shattered the silence. The youngest, a boy with eyes that reflected the weight of hardship, turned to his mother. "Why, he whispered, "why can't we live like that?"

" She replied, her voice a gentle murmur, and said to him: Because we live in Palestine and the Zionist enemy hates the children of Palestine.

The child asked his mother again in astonishment: Why does the Zionist enemy hate the children of Palestine, mother?

His mother, the lines on her face etching a map of resilience and struggle, forced a smile. "Because, my little dove," she

said, her voice hoarse, "we are the keepers of stories. We hold the memory of that life within us, a flickering candle in the darkness."

The boy furrowed his brow, his voice laced with confusion. "But" he persisted, "we don't have stories anymore. Just the grumbling in our bellies and the booming of the bad men."

His mother reached out, her touch a comforting weight on his shoulder. "We have stories in our hearts, my love," she said softly. "Stories whispered down through generations, tales of a land where laughter echoed freely and markets overflowed with bounty. Stories of a time before the shadows fell."

She closed her eyes for a moment, a flicker of longing crossing her features. "We hold these stories close, like embers against the night. Because when the darkness finally lifts, it will be those stories that guide us back to the light."

A single tear traced a glistening path down her cheek. But as she opened her eyes, a spark of defiance ignited within them. "And you," she continued, her voice gaining strength, "you are the next chapter in our story. You will carry the memory of this hardship, but also the hope for a brighter future."

## **Mother's Day**

Today is Mother's Day, and her mother was martyred in the Zionist bombing that destroyed the house she built with years of hard work and sacrifice.

Every Mother's Day, she would give her mother a flower and bury herself in her large, warm embrace that smelled of cooking fat, love, and Palestinian oranges that her mother worked with every day.

Today she decided to bring her mother a birthday flower and hold on to her memory despite the pain of losing her. With a piece of chalk, she drew a large circle on the ground where her mother was buried, the size of her lap when she was alive. She curled up on the floor inside the circle like a fetus, and inhaled the intoxicating scent of oranges, the memory of her mother.

## **Panting**

Everyone who dreamed of getting married in Gaza, whether they were men or women, was forced to crowd into a small space, and their big dreams were narrowed until they were reduced.

Like them, they live a cruel torture called fulfilling marriage requests. He no longer dreams of a beautiful house, luxurious furniture, a joyful wedding, and a huge party. All he wants now is a room where he can meet Samar, his lover and cousin. He wants a roof to shade them and the joy of their gathering, clothes to cover them, and the presence of the participants according to the crumbs of sadness and waiting that have escaped the grip of the Zionist enemy.

The panting inhabits his soul, engulfs him, and makes him his toy in the world of illusion. There is no place available to rent, no goods available for purchase in the markets that have been under siege for years, no money to facilitate matters, no work available, and no wedding invitees who can attend his wedding due to the episodes of siege, embargo, assassination, arrest, and deadly closed roads.

All paths are closed in his face and in the face of his marriage to his beloved Samar, whose hope has begun to be eaten away by spinsterhood, just as it is eating away the hopes of most of his friends, relatives and acquaintances who have dreamed of

the impossible marriage in this occupied city for years, and who struggles valiantly to remain alive.

He surprises Samar as she sits in front of her collapsed house, overlooking the Gaza Sea, feeding him her sadness. He approaches her and whispers in her ear, which is hidden behind her braid: Will you marry me?

She smiled at him, and happily exclaimed without hesitation: Yes, I will marry you

- “But there is no room I can secure for our wedding”!

- “We get married here on the seashore, and live among its rocks”.

## School

The peeling paint on the school walls held more stories. The rusty pipes grumbled like a chorus of grumpy old men, and the sheer density of bodies could make the air thick on a summer's day. Yet, this ramshackle building was a sanctuary. Here, under the watchful gaze of cracked plaster saints, knowledge was dispensed like a precious potion, and dreams, however outlandish, were encouraged to bloom. It was here, amidst the controlled chaos, that he was being molded into a future doctor, his mother had dreamt of, whispered to him like a lullaby every night. He didn't mind the creaking floorboards or the lukewarm lunches. This place, with all its imperfections, was the forge where his ambitions were taking shape.

The war had turned his tiny classroom into a makeshift home. Huddled together were his family, relatives, and neighbors' families – all displaced from their bombed-out homes. The International Relief Organization, a beacon of hope in a time of suffering, had opened the school's doors, offering temporary shelter.

Gone were the days of neatly arranged desks and the familiar scent of chalk. The faded green blackboard still stood defiantly, bearing the remnants of their last math class – a set of equations their teacher, in a desperate bid for normalcy,

had scribbled on it, hoping they'd find the answers even amongst the chaos.

He did not have the opportunity to solve it because of the satanic bombardment that the Zionists rained down on them, so he lost his notebooks, books, and school bag in this genocidal attack.

For days, a peculiar focus bloomed in the boy's eyes as he stared at those equations. The devastation outside had ignited a different kind of fire within him. He saw the desperation etched on the faces around him, the fear of sickness hanging heavy in the makeshift shelter. The once-abstract math problems suddenly transformed into a challenge, a puzzle he needed to solve. He pounced on the equations on the board, his determination fueled by a newfound purpose – to become a doctor, a healer, a champion against the silent enemy of disease. The cramped classroom, filled with the whispers of displaced lives, became his training ground, his focus fueled by a single dream – to rise above the ashes of war and become a doctor, distinguished not by name, but by the lives he'd mend.

## Face

The boy's face, framed by a mop of unruly brown hair, held the quiet intensity of a seasoned observer. His gaze, unblinking and serene, transcended the barbed wire fence that separated him from the world beyond. There, the children of the Zionist colonists, their laughter like wind chimes in the afternoon breeze, played with an abandon that seemed both joyous and cruel in its stark contrast to his own reality.

He watched, not with envy, but with a deep, simmering determination. Their colorful toys, symbols of a life he could only imagine, held no allure for him. His focus was on the land itself, each stolen acre etched into his memory like a sacred map. His lips moved silently, tracing the invisible boundaries, counting not just the distance, but the weight of loss that pressed down upon him.

A gentle hand settled on his shoulder, startling him from his reverie. He turned to see an elder, his face weathered by time and hardship, yet his eyes held a spark of unwavering defiance. The man had spoken to him before, his voice a low rumble, his questions laced with a quiet empathy.

"Do you wish you had their toys?" the man had asked once, his gaze lingering on the children playing beyond the fence.

The boy had shaken his head, his voice barely a whisper, "No. I'm counting the land they stole from us, the land where my grandfather used to tell stories under the shade of the old olive tree. I planted a small one there before they took it all. I want to get it back someday."

## **Tunnel**

The tunnel gaped open like a monstrous maw, mocking him with its silence. It had been his mother's passage, a secret path stitched into the earth, leading to a hidden land whispered to hold a cure for his brother's wasting sickness. Two weeks, they'd promised. Two weeks until her return. but the Zionist bombing of Gaza had come, a symphony of destruction that choked the tunnel with a shroud of dirt and despair.

Every morning, the boy would stand before the collapsed entrance. Not with hope, but a fierce, unwavering defiance. He saw his brothers whisper, their eyes filled with a pity that chafed at his raw grief. They spoke of an opening, the Rafah crossing, will befor only one day, a chance for his mother and brother to walk back through the scar in the earth.

But the boy knew better. He knew the tunnel held a deeper secret now. It wasn't just choked with rubble; it pulsed with his mother's unspoken love, a beacon that only he could see. Each sunrise, the tunnel exhaled a faint luminescence, a spectral echo of his mother's spirit trapped within. He wouldn't let empty promises lure him away. He'd become a sentinel, his vigil a silent conversation with the earth, waiting for the tunnel to cough up its secret, for the pale light to solidify into her hand, reaching out from the darkness to guide him back to her.

## **Sleep**

Sleep wasn't a refuge for him, it was a battlefield. Every closed eye brought the pounding of the Zionist soldiers, the screams of loved ones, the cold steel bite of fear. Soldiers, like phantoms of the night, haunted his slumber. They raided, they ravaged, they stole lives – his family's. Sleep became his tormentor, a treacherous trap baited with the promise of rest.

He was small, powerless against their might. A child caught in a storm, unable to shield his family from the relentless onslaught. So, he made a pact fueled by desperation – a vow to defy sleep itself. He became an unwilling sentinel, forever vigilant against the encroaching darkness that threatened to consume them all.

## **Gift**

The meager coins in his pocket felt like pebbles against the tide of his love for Najwa. Birthday traditions whispered of trinkets and frills, but his heart ached at the thought. Those were baubles, unfit for his daughter, the one destined for a revolution's heart.

His meager savings wouldn't buy a crown, but something far greater. A book. Not fleeting pleasure, but a wellspring of knowledge, a forge that would shape her young mind. Within its pages, Najwa wouldn't find fleeting joy, but the seeds of resilience, the tools to build a future brighter than any shop window trinket.

## **Escape**

War had become her life. Every checkpoint, every search, every scrap of news was another torment. Escape was a lifeline thrown from the sky, a chance to leave the relentless suffering in Palestine.

Marrying a Palestinian deportee in a faraway land wasn't ideal, but it was freedom. Freedom from Zionist soldiers, the constant fear, the gnawing hunger. It was a path to a life filled with things she'd forgotten – safety, comfort, maybe even a little joy.

Reaching the border crossing had been a brutal journey. Her one meager bag held all she had left, a stark contrast to the life she was leaving behind. Her brother, a silent witness to their shared ordeal, stood by her side.

With a stamped passport, fleeing Palestine forever was just one step away. A life of peace stretched before her, a stark contrast to the epic struggle she'd endured. Yet, a flicker of doubt ignited. She craved a life beyond mere survival; she wanted to contribute to the fight, to be part of the glorious history her people were writing.

In a defiant act, she turned away from the exit. Her Palestinian identity, a symbol of her homeland, felt heavy in her pocket. With her brother by her side, she retraced her steps. The life of a refugee might be hard, but it was hers. She would face the enemy, endure the hardship, and wait for the day they would be driven out. This was her beautiful destiny, a fight for a brighter future, not a comfortable escape.

## Graveyard

It is the largest historical cemetery in Palestine, more than a thousand years old. All Palestinian faces end up in this cemetery, the sprawling embrace had held its slumbering residents. Whispers of lives past danced on the wind, a symphony of history sung by weathered stones and gnarled trees. Here, all found their final rest, nestled in the heart of their homeland. This was the largest such sanctuary, a testament to a people's unwavering connection to their soil.

But a shadow, cold and hungry, stretched towards this hallowed ground. The Zionist enemy, consumed by their insatiable ambition, saw only an obstacle – a graveyard in the way of progress. Their plan: a monstrous city, a monument to their greed, built upon the bones of the past.

The first sign of desecration came as a chilling combing of the grounds. Protests erupted, a human shield forming against the impending catastrophe. But the enemy's hearts were as barren as the wasteland they sought to create. Their machines, devoid of empathy, roared to life, tearing through the cemetery. Uprooted tombstones lay scattered like broken teeth. Ancient trees, the verdant guardians of the dead, were ripped from the soil. Walls, silent witnesses to countless stories, crumbled under the relentless assault.

Night fell, cloaking the desecrated ground in a chilling silence. But beneath the cold earth, a tremor stirred. Bones,

long undisturbed, began to vibrate with a newfound energy. The slumbering inhabitants, roused by the violation of their sacred haven, rose from their eternal rest. Cloaked in their tattered shrouds, they formed an army of the forgotten, their empty sockets burning with a cold fury. The night echoed with the rattle of bone on bone as they surged forward, a silent, spectral host driven by a righteous anger. They were the guardians of their eternal peace, the defenders of the hallowed ground, and they would not rest until their final resting place was restored.

## Coat

The unforgiving winter had become their cruel companion. A whole month passed, and the Palestinian Fedayeen were stoning the Zionist enemy with their fire and refusing to surrender to them. For a month, the Fedayeen had weathered a relentless siege. Bombs rained from the skies like a metallic plague, the earth trembling with each deafening detonation. Hunger gnawed at their bellies, thirst parched their throats, but it was the bone-chilling cold that gnawed deepest.

By a stroke of luck, he had clung to his thick Russian coat, a relic from a bygone winter. His comrade, shivered uncontrollably, his thin garments offering scant protection. He offered the coat, again and again, each time met stubborn refusal. The world shrank. The besieged citadel, the biting wind, and the unwavering loyalty to his friend filled his vision. He was haunted by the ghosts of his people, their voices echoing a twisted desire for a world cleansed of everyone but themselves.

Then, a tremor of movement. Soldiers swarmed through a breach in the castle wall, their boots pounding a rhythm of imminent doom. There was no time for pleas or reinforcements. He ripped off his coat, thrusting it hands comrade to his comrade. "The cold will claim me sooner than these invaders," he declared, his voice hoarse with determination. With his rifle clutched tight, he sprinted

toward the enemy, the last of his precious bullets singing their deadly song. He fought with a fury born of desperation, his body a shield against the tide. Each shot was a defiant roar, each breath a testament to an unyielding spirit. He fought until the very wellspring of his life ran dry, a solitary figure bathed in the crimson glow of war. The winter wind whispered a mournful dirge as he fell, his sacrifice a testament to the unwavering strength found in the bonds of brotherhood.

## **Journalist**

He arrived with a hunger for controversy. Pictures of the crimes of the Zionists, bleeding revolutionaries, and dramatic narratives - that's what sold. He craved the buzz, the headlines, a bigger paycheck in the media machine he served. Morality was a variable depending on the highest bidder. Here, amidst the human wreckage, he'd prepared to paint the "Palestinians" as the villain,

But these "Palestinians" defied his script. They didn't kidnap him for propaganda; they stole him into the raw reality of their struggle. Two weeks of witnessing their suffering, documenting their plight, shattered his comfortable cynicism. He clicked his shutter a thousand times, each frame a testament to the injustice he'd ignored.

He sent his report, a hollow echo of his experience. Whether it would be published mattered little. Released, he could have walked away. Instead, an invisible chain held him. They hadn't just kidnapped him; they'd kidnapped his apathy. Disguising with the Palestinian keffiyeh, he chose to follow them, a different kind of journalist now, forever changed by the stories etched on his soul.

## **Friend**

Every time he befriends a boy, the Zionists steal him from him and throw him into the arms of death.

The air hung heavy with the scent of incense and despair as the young boy shuffled forward. Three somber figures lay ahead, their lifeless forms shrouded in white cloths, ready to be carried to their final rest like martyrs. Grief, a weight far too heavy for his small frame, hunched his shoulders even lower.

His age denied him the privilege of bearing the fourth friend. The one a sniper's bullet had stolen yesterday, on their walk to school. The memory, raw and painful, flickered in his mind: the sudden thud, the blood staining his hands, the choked sobs that replaced the playful banter on their lips. No final words, only the weight of a life extinguished in his embrace.

Friendship, a concept he cherished, had become a twisted game. Each boy he connected with became prey, snatched away by an unseen enemy and thrown into the maw of death. His teacher's words, a faint solace, echoed in his ears: "They're free, safe in the upper heaven." Yet, love for friendship warred with a gnawing fear. Could he dare to open his heart to another, knowing the shadow of death might follow? Could he bear the loss of a fifth friend?

The boy squared his shoulders, a flicker of defiance replacing the despair. He wouldn't let fear dictate his life. He would hold onto the memories of his friends, the laughter they shared, the warmth of their camaraderie. The enemy might take them, but it could never steal the bonds they forged. He would keep his heart open, a beacon of love in the face of darkness. Perhaps, just perhaps, friendship – and the love it nurtured – would be his weapon after all.

## The keffiyeh<sup>1</sup>

When they were forcibly expelled from their homes by force of arms and brutality, they were told that they would return there after a few days. They waited a long time at the first departure station. He decided to return to his home to bring some food, clothes, and water for his mother, father, and brothers. The expulsion was a whirlwind of violence. Bayonets glinted in the harsh sun, their cold promise a stark contrast to the whispered assurances, "Just a few days." A hollow echo in the face of forced exile.

They huddled under the grapevines, a displaced family clinging to the memory of home. Unbaked bread sat abandoned in the tray, a testament to a life brutally interrupted. Jars of olives stood untouched, a silent witness to the stolen harvest.

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<sup>1</sup>-**The keffiyeh:** also spelled kufiyeh, is a traditional headwear typically worn by men in the Middle East. It's a large square scarf, usually made of cotton, that's designed to be practical and protective.

Palestinian keffiyeh: The black-and-white checkered pattern specifically associated with Palestinian identity.

Cultural significance: The keffiyeh can represent different things depending on the region and context.

**The keffiyeh** or **kufiyeh** (, romanized: *kūfiyyah*, lit. 'coif'), also known in Arabic as a **ghutrah shemagh** ( *šumāġ*), or **ḥaṭṭah** ), is a traditional headdress worn by men from parts of the Middle East. It is fashioned from a square scarf, and is usually made of cotton.<sup>[2]</sup> The keffiyeh is commonly found in arid regions, as it provides protection from sunburn, dust and sand. An agal is often used by Arabs to keep it in  
[/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keffiyeh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keffiyeh)

Driven by a desperate need, he embarked on a perilous return, the weight of their worry a heavy burden on his shoulders. The darkness offered a fragile cloak, but the illusion of safety shattered as figures materialized from the shadows. Villagers, once friends, now transformed into enforcers. Two fell, silenced by blades that gleamed like malevolent moons.

A month of forced servitude followed. Beatings, humiliation, and the constant gnawing fear became his companions. Stealing by night, delivering supplies to the very people who stole his home, a bitter irony that twisted in his gut.

Escape. A desperate gamble fueled by a flicker of hope. He returned, a single survivor bearing the weight of a shattered dream. The news he brought was a heavy stone dropped into the well of their hope. Returning wasn't an option, not for now.

The son of the village, another victim, succumbed to the brutal journey and the crushing oppression. A life extinguished before it could truly begin. He returned to his family crying, exhausted and hungry, and the sun covered him with its rays. He did not cry over his torment, but rather he cried intensely, ashamed of his exposed hair after the Zionist criminal gang stole his keffiyeh, forced him to work, and stripped him of his dignity, pride, and heritage. He cried without stopping until his father cut off the only keffiyeh he owned, covered his head with half of it, and covered his son's head with the other half.

## **The passage**

The crossing, a silent observer, bore the brunt of countless tragedies. Witness to a torrent of tears, the gnawing hunger, and the soul-crushing despair of the Palestinians. Shame gnawed at its core, mirroring the pain it saw daily. Yet, it turned away, a prisoner of its own limitations.

Mothers lost children in its shadow, brothers mourned lost siblings, and wives yearned for absent husbands. The crossing dreamt of offering solace, of throwing open its arms to the downtrodden. But those dreams remained caged, choked by the iron grip of the Zionist soldiers - both within and without. All were the enemy, their faces and languages mere masks.

Then, one day, a resolution flickered within the crossing. In a silent rebellion, it cast off the putrid cloak of obligation. With a surge of defiance, it tore itself free, fleeing the scene of suffering. Its place remained, a gaping wound, a challenge to those who lacked the courage of conviction.

## **Honor**

The desert sun beat down, a merciless hammer forging sweat from his brow. Hunger gnawed, a familiar companion in this harsh land. Yet, a new terror, a viper coiling in his gut, eclipsed all else. Whispers, like dust devils dancing on the horizon, carried tales of the neighboring villages –the Zionist gangs 's cruelty, the desecration of the Palestinians women's honor.

His heart, a loyal steed, had always belonged to this land. But now, its gallop faltered. Wife, daughters, granddaughters – the very essence of his family, their honor as fragile as desert flowers – threatened by the storm of barbarity closing in. A bitter seed of sacrifice sprouted in his mind.

He would become a shepherd, not of sheep, but of his womenfolk. With a fierce urgency, he gathered them – wife, daughters, granddaughters, daughters-in-law – a flock fleeing the encroaching darkness. His sons, his own blood, would remain. Theirs, the duty to stand their ground, blades flashing in defense of their land's honor.

The women walked first, a veiled caravan against the scorched earth. He and his remaining sons, a wall of defiance, brought up the rear. Shame, a searing brand, marked his soul. He, who bled for this land, was turning his back on its soil. Yet, the honor of his women – a sacred trust, a whispered prayer – demanded this desperate exodus.

The river, a silver thread shimmering on the horizon, marked the border of their world. Reaching the crossing point, a knot of fear and resolve tightened in his chest. Here, he entrusted his wife, his Amanah, to the hands of strangers who promised safe passage. A pang of heartache, sharp and sudden, threatened to cripple him. But then, a steely glint hardened his eyes. He turned back, the weight of his land, a promise etched in his soul, a heavy burden on his shoulders. He would fight. He would defend its honor, even if it meant leaving a piece of his own heart on the other side of the shimmering river.

## **Desert**

The desert wind whipped around her, sand clinging to her kohl-rimmed eyes. It whispered tales of her brothers, stolen by the army like grains scattered by a careless hand. Three lay beneath the unforgiving sun, martyrs who defended their nomadic home. The fourth, a phantom in her heart, was a captive in more ways than one. They'd taken his spirit, molded him into their weapon, leaving her adrift in a sea of loss and shame.

But the desert held secrets, as old and cunning as herself. Her beauty, a Bedouin rose with thorns hidden beneath velvet skin, became her weapon. She knew these men, their predictable hunger for a desert oasis in a woman's form. One by one, she lured them under the vast canvas of the night sky, a siren song of solace in the desolate landscape.

Hatred, a smoldering coal in her chest, fueled her vengeance. Her steps, silent as a desert viper, led them deeper, further from any hope of rescue. With swift movements honed by years roaming the untamed land, she'd disarm them, strip away their arrogance and military might. No guns, no radios, just men reduced to their barest selves, as lost in the endless dunes as her spirit had been.

## **Painting gallery**

The man clutched his citizenship, a bitter weight in his pocket. It wasn't his. Not truly. It was a brand the occupying force had seared onto him, a mark of ownership on a stolen city, a defiled homeland. His heart, however, remained stubbornly free. Unbound by forced papers, it beat for a land untouched, a people unbowed.

He had channeled his grief, his rage, into art. Vivid paintings, born from the ashes of villages, the scars on his city's face, the ravaged beauty of his stolen land. International aid, a lifeline thrown across a chasm of despair, had secured a permit, a fragile bubble of permission to showcase the brutality he couldn't scream about.

Curious faces thronged the exhibit. The paintings, a tapestry of loss, drew them in, one of them with the big red pig-head leaned towards him and asked him curiously: Did you paint these paintings?

The artist's lips curved into a wry smile. "No," he countered, his voice quiet but firm. "You did."

## **The House**

His house was small, crowded with his large family and their frequent guests. He had always wished that his family had a bigger house , so that he could have some comfort and privacy in a room of his own instead of sleeping like a pickled fish among his many siblings. The house was a symphony of chaos, a cramped chorus of lives crammed together. Bodies overflowed from rooms like overstuffed pillows, and his own space felt less like a bedroom and more like a pickled fish can. Privacy was a phantom, fleeting and whispered, while comfort was a luxury reserved for dreams. He yearned for the hushed solace of a room that was just his, a haven away from the constant press of elbows and toes. Back home, the house sang a different tune, its spacious rooms echoing with a promise of solitude, a promise that here, in this teeming orchestra of family, felt as distant as a forgotten song.

The occupation bombed their small house, and its fragments flew left and right. They all found themselves out in the open without shelter. His mother surrendered to the loud howls, and his brothers competed to find a place to retire after the Zionist soldiers expelled them from the land that is a memory of their home. As for him, he smiled gloatingly in the faces of the Zionist soldiers because he was now able to make Palestine a great homeland in which he could go out and have fun as he wanted without distress.

## **One Sentence**

Dust motes danced in the fractured sunlight filtering through the gaping hole where his home used to be. On a lone, crumbling section of wall, a poignant sentence stood defiant. Just a few days ago, it had been a child's playful scrawl, met with his mother's gentle scolding. Now, the silence was deafening, the beauty of the words a stark contrast to the devastation around them.

He read his remaining sentence: "Palestine is my home and we will remain in it." Some of its letters have almost disappeared due to peeling wall paint as a result of the bombing. As he climbed onto one of the stones of his martyred house, he took some of his blood to color the letters of the sentence: Palestine is my home, and we will remain in it. A single sentence, a defiant whisper etched upon rubble where a home once stood. Written in defiance, yet born of love, it stands as a monument to loss and a child's resilience, forever etched in his mother's heart, a silent tear staining the memory of painted walls.

## Mosque

He never thought that their sheikh in the mosque, who taught them to recite and interpret the Qur'an, would be the first to be slaughtered by Zionist soldiers, he spent his life volunteering to teach Qur'an recitation to the people of the city of **Nablus**<sup>1</sup>.

the imam, a man who walked hand-in-hand with God's word, lay lifeless on the mosque's bloodied prayer rug. The irony was a bitter pill to swallow. The sheikh, revered for his kindness and tireless dedication, had never raised a hand against another soul. Blind since birth, he knew his students by the melody of their recitations, each a thread woven into the tapestry of his life's work. A bullet, a traitor's act, had silenced the song.

Traces of blood, a crimson stain on the holy carpet, seemed to hold the warmth of the sheikh's life force. Grief, a heavy cloak, settled on the young man's shoulders. He clutched the sheikh's Qur'an, its worn pages whispering tales of faith. A kiss landed on the cover, a silent prayer for solace. The Qur'an found a home in his pocket, a shield against the

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<sup>1</sup> -**Nablus**: is a fascinating city located in the Palestinian Territories, about 49 kilometers north of Jerusalem. It boasts a rich history dating back thousands of years, evident in its diverse cultural and religious tapestry. Here's a glimpse into what makes Nablus unique: Located in the northern West Bank, Nablus is known for its ancient roots, dating back to Canaanite times. It was once a major center of trade and culture, and its historical significance is evident in its numerous archaeological sites and Ottoman-era architecture.

coming storm. In his other hand, a pile of stones, cold and unforgiving, awaited their purpose. Vengeance, a bitter fruit, sprouted from the fertile ground of his loss. He set out, his heart a battlefield where grief and rage wrestled for control.

## **Solidarity**

The air crackled with a tension thicker than hunger pangs. His father and uncles, defiant warriors, waged a silent battle within the cold walls of the detention center. Their hunger strike, a weapon against injustice, echoed through the bars. His frail grandmother, mirroring their resolve, refused sustenance until her sons walked free. But it was him, barely a wisp of a boy, shouldering a burden too heavy. His strike wasn't for food, but for time to fast-forward into a man, strong enough to liberate his family. In his innocent eyes, they were titans, their steely resolve a testament to their power. Yet, a worry gnawed at him. His grandmother, a wisp of a woman ravaged by illness, couldn't withstand the hunger that fueled his hope. He longed to replace her strike with a different weapon – the silent power of prayer.

## **The veil**

The British forces, confident after cornering the rebels in the mountains, believed their victory was imminent. They envisioned capturing them easily in nearby towns, disguised amongst the townsfolk. Little did they know, a powerful symbol of unity bound the revolutionaries – the Palestinian keffiyeh.

In the cities, the common attire was the red fez, not the keffiyeh. This difference formed the crux of the British plan: a massive raid with thousands of soldiers, rounding up revolutionaries in one fell swoop. Their vision was grim – captured rebels hanging from gallows, a public display to quell the uprising. Even the mountains, they thought, would be powerless to resist.

Dawn broke, and the British soldiers descended upon the Palestinian cities. Yet, their expectation of easily identifying the rebels was shattered. Every man and boy sported the keffiyeh, a sea of black and white defiance. The revolutionaries, once distinct in the mountains, now seamlessly blended into the urban landscape. The British general, faced with a city cloaked in a symbol of resistance, could only watch his meticulously laid plan crumble. A wave of silent triumph swept through the hearts of the hidden revolutionaries.

## **Expected**

Days blurred into a weary eternity. The camp pulsed with a simmering anger, a desperate longing for the life ripped away. Escape, however, was a cruel mirage. Their freedom was hostage to the Zionist enemy's retreat, a condition that seemed etched in stone. But waiting wasn't in his blood. He wouldn't watch his future wither.

Marriage to his beloved awaited his brother Musab's release from the enemy's clutches. But Musab was buried under a mountain of four life sentences for the audacity of hurling a stone at their oppressors. His mother's dream of the holy pilgrimage, Hajj, was as unattainable as the distant stars. The relentless bulldozers, instruments of their exile, had scraped away the land, silencing the rustling leaves and replacing them with a desolate emptiness. His mother wouldn't be picking olives for Hajj this year, or any year - the enemy's machines of destruction had devoured the olive groves.

But amidst the despair, a spark ignited within him. He wouldn't be a passive pawn. The cost was irrelevant. Freedom had a price, and he was ready to pay. He didn't need to wait. He had a plan, a desperate gamble fueled by love and defiance.

The very symbol of their subjugation – the monstrous bulldozer he steered as a laborer – became his weapon. He threw himself into the driver's seat, the engine roaring to life

beneath him. The bulldozer lurched forward, a runaway metal beast. He didn't just drive. He became a wrecking ball, a one-man insurgency. The bulldozer was an extension of his fury, a battering ram against his oppressors. It wasn't about mindless destruction; it was about carving a path, a passage to freedom for himself, his brother, and his mother's dream. He would chase away the enemy, leaving a trail of twisted metal and fleeing soldiers in his wake. He wouldn't stop until their captors were crushed, until the impossible became reality.

## **Black Sea**

The crisp blue memories of the Gaza Beach, where her laughter danced with the waves, felt like a cruel mirage now. Her mother's words echoed in her ears, "You are pure, like the hearts of martyrs." But purity was a forgotten luxury in this war-torn reality.

This morning, she woke to a nightmare. Their home, once a haven, was choking on a tide of filth. The enemy's sewage weapon had struck again, transforming their streets into fetid canals. Her daughter, wide-eyed with morbid curiosity, pointed at the encroaching blackness. "Is this...the Black Sea for the Zionists?"

The question hung heavy in the air, laced with the stench that assaulted their senses. With a grimace that mirrored her daughter's fear, the mother choked out, "Yes, my love. This is their sea."

## **Hobby**

Every skill he learned, every ounce of strength he built, was a weapon forged in the fires of vengeance. As a child, his nimbleness wasn't just for tag, it was for leaving phantom bombs - heavy bags on deserted sidewalks - that sent patrolling Zionist soldiers scrambling, their fear a twisted trophy. Years bled into purpose, and the leather slingshot he crafted became an extension of his growing anger. Each marble launched, a pinpoint of rebellion chipping away at the occupying force. He honed himself to a silent blade, a predator stalking his prey. Finally, a weapon became his constant companion, a grim reflection of the stolen peace. Each fallen enemy wasn't just eliminated, it was a sacrifice laid at the altar of his rage. The severed heads, grotesque offerings to the Palestinians who had perished under the usurper's tyranny.

## **Guardian**

The wind howled, a banshee carrying the bitter taste of dread. The younger Palestinian boy breaths were ragged claws clawing at the air, each gasp a defiance against the coarse twine that choked his wrists. The Zionist soldiers descended like a pack of ravens, their laughter echoing off the mountain's skeletal frame. Easy pickings, they'd croaked, their cruel amusement etching lines on their faces. The memory of his scattered flock was a fresh gash in his soul. He could almost hear their panicked bleats, a silent symphony swallowed by the jeers of his captors. Now, he was a broken marionette at the foot of the weathered headstone, a stark sentinel of mortality mocking him from the mountain's brow.

From the cold embrace of the earth, a spirit rose, a phantom stained with the crimson echo of sacrifice. His face, a mosaic of a hundred fallen warriors, held the whispers of their silent glory. He was the dawn breaking upon a world choked by shadows, the embodiment of the martyrs' righteous fury. Fear, a writhing serpent, coiled around their hearts, sending them scattering like frightened rats from the hallowed ground. They fled, not from stone or flesh, but from the righteous inferno that blazed in the eyes of the resurrected martyr.

## **The Palestinian Republic, with a length of 95 km**

Dalal, a mere wisp of a woman at twenty, carried the weight of the world on her small shoulders. Years of displacement, the horrors of war camps, and the sting of poverty had stolen her childhood, but ignited a fire within. Gone was the submissive girl. In her place stood a warrior, trained by the most calloused hands. Here, under the cloak of military garb, her frail body held a resolute spirit. Her dream, audacious and fierce, was to liberate Tel al-Rabi' for even a fleeting sixteen hours. With the Palestinian flag fluttering defiantly on a hijacked bus, Dalal and her guerrilla comrades announced a free Palestine, stretching across 95 reclaimed kilometers.

Their capture defied logic. Held hostage themselves, they demanded the release of their imprisoned brothers and sisters. Through a Yemeni translator, Dalal's voice rang out, a challenge to the bewildered soldiers: "This is our land! What brings you here?"

Eyes wide with fear, the soldiers witnessed a spectacle unlike any other. This small woman, with warriors beside her - a Lebanese, a Yemeni, and ten others - had infiltrated the heart of the occupied city. Two hijacked buses, sixty-eight captives - a testament to their unwavering resolve. For a glorious moment, freedom danced in the air. They lived, they

fought, they dreamt on stolen soil. Finally, surrounded by the ominous machinery of war, they stood defiant. Bullets rained down, claiming martyrs, until one pierced Dalal's eye, granting her an eternal slumber in the land she loved. Even in death, her spirit soared. The enemy, consumed by rage, grabbed her hair, a futile attempt to extinguish the inferno within her. A final, defiant smile played on her lips. Her message, a rallying cry, echoed through the heavens: a promise of a land forever Arab.

## **A Shadow Dancer's Story**

The flickering lamplight cast dancing shadows on the white linen screen, weaving tales of valor and chivalry. Behind it, shrouded in darkness, stood the puppeteer, not a knight in shining armor, but a man known only as "the Shadow Dancer." His true life was far removed from the heroic ballads he so masterfully breathed life into. His clothes, like his life, bore the marks of a wandering existence, a stark contrast to the intricate figures crafted by his calloused hands.

Yet, when the performance began, a metamorphosis took place. His voice, roughened by the dust of the road, transformed into the resonating baritone of a fearless warrior. His gestures, once listless, became imbued with the grace of a legendary swordsman. He poured his own yearnings for adventure and purpose into every sway of the puppets, every clash of cymbals.

His audience, young and old, was oblivious to the man behind the curtain. For them, he was an invisible bard, conjuring worlds where justice prevailed and love conquered all. They saw reflected in the shadows the heroes they dreamt of becoming: Antara, the valiant knight, or Saif bin Dhi Yazan, the unwavering prince. Evenings in his company were escapes into forgotten times, where children squealed with delight and elders sighed with nostalgia.

His fame, however, remained confined to the dimly lit cafes of Jerusalem. No grand titles adorned him, no riches filled his pockets. He lived a life of quiet contentment, fueled by the joy he brought to others and the solace he found in his art. Perhaps, some might say, he was content to remain a mere shadow, forever hidden from the limelight.

But then there were the brides. Young women, drawn to his enigmatic presence, formed an unshakeable bond with him. They showered him with gifts and favors, not out of mere admiration, but for a connection deeper, more enigmatic. Were they drawn to the man hidden in the shadows, or the heroes he brought to life? Was there a yearning in him, mirrored in their eyes, for a life beyond the stage, a life where the lines between shadow and substance, art and reality, might finally blur?

The answer, like the dancer himself, remained shrouded in mystery. The story, however, was just beginning. In the dance of shadows and whispers, the Shadow Dancer had woven a captivating narrative, not just for his audience, but for himself. And as the final strains of his song faded, one couldn't help but wonder if, someday, he might step out of the shadows and take his own place among the heroes he so eloquently portrayed. His voice was always a hero, his performance was a hero, his emotions were a hero, and his ability to revive events indicated that a hero lived inside him,

but he lived a simple life without prestige, and had only a little money to be satisfied with. He always lived for the art that he loved and lived among its heroes. Brides with whom he lives an indissoluble friendship. Until the Zionist gangs came and attacked the city and its villages, and first occupied the village of Al-Qastal, then the leader - Abdul Qader Al-Husseini - confronted them to liberate the captive village and destroy the gangs that intended to seize its entire territory. Palestine, but the Arabs refused to help or provide assistance to him. With weapons, he decided to defend his homeland with the great manhood he possessed and the few men and weapons. Then free people from everywhere joined them, and the owner of the shadow joined them, who left his armor and blood in trust with the owner of the café in the old market in Jerusalem until his return, and he joined Abdul Qader. Al-Husseini and his men.

Finally, the time has come for the shadow man to play the heroic role that he has lived time after time in the world of imagination, but he has never lived it in reality. He fought with his only rifle until death came to him after it chased him many times while he was killing gangsters, which prevented him from seeing the village of Al-Qastal liberated from...the Zionist gangs, and he did not see his brave leader martyred in this battle, but he finally played the role of immortal heroism that he had always dreamed of, He left life satisfied, without anyone knowing his name or who he was.

## **Eid**

Five silent Eids. Five years where Zionist bullets choked the laughter in their home, leaving only echoes of stolen joy. He'd had enough. This year, under the cold gaze of guns, Eid would dance, defiant and bright, across their very doorstep. A promise, whispered under the watchful eyes of stars, burned within him: to bring the magic of Eid back to their walls, walls silent since Uncle Talal's sacrifice painted them with grief.

Every coin scraped from construction work, every morsel saved during Ramadan, was poured into crafting this Eid. The youngest's new clothes, vibrant as hope, were lovingly adorned by trembling hands. The house gleamed with borrowed joy, balloons its rainbow tears, candles its flickering prayers. He walked towards them, guided by the aroma of pies - nuts, dates, and dreams swirling in buttery pastry. And then, silence. A window yawned open, spitting out his brother's soul. A bullet, cold and cruel, had found its mark while he savored his mother's love and awaited the Eid he'd longed for.

# ***Captivity Melodies***



## **Hopes**

Amal. It wasn't just a name; it was a lifeline. A name she bestowed upon her new-born daughter, a vessel for her dreams, hopes, and the gnawing fear for a future shadowed by an aging husband. Unlike other women, Amal, the elder, had no parents or helping hands – a stark contrast to her own childhood, a time of blissful indulgence, shielded by her parents' overprotectiveness.

But life, a relentless sculptor, had other plans. One day, on her way to school, the youthful Amal was snatched by Zionist soldiers. No crime, no accusation, just a chilling disappearance. They flung her into a detention center, a desolate desert prison for Palestinians, a place devoid of mercy. Books and notebooks, her tools for learning, were callously confiscated. There, amidst the harsh realities of confinement, Amal, the carefree child, was forced to grow up.

News of her plight spread. International voices rose in unison, demanding the release of the world's youngest political prisoner. After months of stolen youth and endured hardships, Amal was finally released. But a part of her, the innocent child, remained forever imprisoned within the walls of that desert prison.

## **Baby prisoner**

The air in the cramped cell hung heavy, thick with the scent of despair and damp earth. Mold, like an unwelcome guest, painted grotesque murals across the rough-hewn walls. Hunger gnawed at his tiny belly, a constant companion in this dismal place. Faces, etched with hardship, pressed against his view – a sea of humanity trapped within these cold stone walls.

Yet, despite the suffocating atmosphere, a spark flickered within him – a defiant ember refusing to be extinguished. He would survive. After all, his very arrival was a testament to his tenacity. He had been born amidst the chaos, his birth cry a defiant challenge to their captors.

His mother, bound by cruel chains, had fought tooth and nail to bring him into the world. No soft coo greeted his arrival; her hands, too, were prisoners. His first taste of freedom was the harsh reality of hunger, his mother's milk a fleeting memory before it even began. A cruel twist of fate stole her consciousness, leaving him a fragile new-born adrift in a sea of suffering.

Love, however, was a language he understood innately. He felt it in the warmth of her whispers, promises of escape from this wretched place she called their "prison." He held onto them fiercely, these dreams of freedom. They fueled his will to live, a silent rebellion against their captors.

He yearned to see his father, Jaber, his sister, and all the loved ones she spoke of. He dreamt of one day confronting the imposing female soldiers who guarded them, he will soon be able to raise two of his fingers as a Palestinian victory sign.

He was the youngest prisoner, they said – a title bestowed upon him with an unsettling amusement. He didn't grasp its full significance yet, but a seed of understanding had been sown. One day, he would understand the weight of this title. Until then, he clung to his mother's promises, believing with every fiber of his being that one day, the walls of this prison would crumble, and they would walk free.

## Strike

Hunger, a relentless beast, gnawed at his insides. It mimicked the gnawing injustice that kept him prisoner. Months bled into weeks, his gaunt form a stark etching against the unforgiving stone walls. Force-fed sustenance, a cruel parody of nourishment, left him enfeebled, a captive to his cot, his world shrunk to its unforgiving frame.

They craved his surrender, a hollowed husk succumbing to their silent torment. Whispers of freedom campaigns, mere echoes beyond these suffocating walls, elicited no reaction. Yet, even as his body faltered, a defiant ember flickered within.

The guard, a cog in the oppressive machine, sat opposite him, oblivious to the silent symphony of defiance. He scoffed, ripping into a bounty of food – a feast lightyears away from the prisoner's reality. "This pointless starvation," the guard sneered, morbid curiosity twisting his words. "Madness."

The prisoner, his voice a rasp but his spirit unwavering, countered, "You, who gorge without a thought, cannot grasp the fire that burns within. It's the fire of freedom, of justice, a light they can never extinguish."

His words echoed, heavy in the stagnant air. A testament to the unyielding spirit that resided within his frail form. They could steal his freedom, but his voice, his unwavering resolve, remained a beacon of defiance, a silent protest against the encroaching darkness.

## **The poem**

A poet, his heart a brimming well of verse, But cursed with memory frail and perverse. Each word for Khadija, his love so true, He etched on paper, lest inspiration flew.

Thrown in the pit, where pens and paper lay banned, He found a solace in this prisoner's land. He'd break his stanzas, ten to every soul, A scattered tapestry, to make his verses whole.

Through bars and stones, he'd quiz and test their recall, Uncaring of their jeers, their mocking drawl. For in their memories, his love's portrait did reside, A symphony of poems, Khadija as his guide.

None dared speak the truth, a mercy bittersweet, That Khadija's journey, life's cruel bullets did meet. And he, in silent grief, a burden he must bear, The knowledge that his love, his world, was no longer there.

His poems, like whispers, in chests they remain, A testament to love, etched deep in every vein. Yet, never to touch her lips, no ear to hear their rhyme, A poignant echo of a love lost in the sands of time.

## **Tears**

Suddenly, just as rain washes away years of drought, the decision comes to release Palestinian prisoners in exchange for deals agreed upon with the Zionist entity.

Rain lashed upon the parched earth, a bittersweet symphony of cleansing and grief. Hope, long dormant, surged through parched hearts.

He raced towards the gates; wings unfurled in desperate anticipation. Each face, etched with hardship and time, was scanned with a yearning so fierce it burned. Was his father among them? Each reunion, each heartfelt embrace, was a dagger to his soul, a painful reminder of his own yearning.

And then, the stark realization. His father wasn't there.

He spun away; a dam built of pride threatening to break. The ache in his throat was a searing ember, threatening to erupt in a torrent of tears. But he was a man, and men, according to the unwritten code etched upon his heart, didn't cry.

He scrubbed the moisture from his eyes with rough palms, feeling the sting of unshed tears. The rain, a mirror to his inner turmoil, continued its relentless fall, washing away dust but leaving the parched cracks of his heart untouched. He stood, alone, a solitary figure amidst the joyful symphony of reunions, the weight of his unspoken grief a heavy cloak upon his shoulders.

## **The prisoner**

He is a new Zionist soldier among the service staff in this Zionist prison. His stupid, flat face was blue with death as he watched the torture of Palestinian detainees.

But he soon tasted the lust of killing people. His huge body was like a hybrid bull, which cut off the life of a young Palestinian man with a single headbutt.

The murdered Palestinian young man emerged from prison with a lifeless body despite his nose. He was the one who threatened him with life imprisonment, defying his youth, handsomeness, courage, and determination that exuded disgust. Disgust in the face of his dullness.

From that moment, Zionist soldier became the real prisoner. Confined not by bars and guards, but by a soul-stained crimson. While the lifeless body of the young man was carried away, another soul soared free, joining the luminous trail of martyrs ascending towards the heavens. Zionist soldier, however, remained trapped – a living prisoner chained to his guilt, condemned to witness the unending procession of liberated souls, a constant reminder of the life he extinguished and the humanity he surrendered.

## **Milk**

Hope, a flickering ember, had almost been extinguished within her. Barren for years, she'd watched love and family slip through her fingers, and a couple, one of whom was her cousin, abandoned her because of her infertility. A cruel reminder of the emptiness she felt. Yet, fate, in a cruel twist, chose that moment to kindle a new flame. Zuhdi, her neighbor, saw beyond the emptiness, offering her a hand and a heart. Their union blossomed, and a miracle unfolded - a son, a gift from the heavens. She never expected that fate would bless her with an infant son - rizk alah - after she lost hope of having children.

But fate, it seemed, wasn't done playing its hand. A cruel turn of events, she found herself a prisoner in a Zionist prison in the desert, far from her infant child, which she had left as a precious trust in the custody of her sister-in-law.

What saddens her most is that her infant needs her milk, which flows from her every time she mentions his name. One pang echoed louder than the clanging of prison bars or the taunts of her captors - the knowledge of her son needing her milk, a life-giving elixir flowing within her. Undeterred by the harsh realities, she clung to a sliver of hope, a belief in the impossible.

With an unwavering faith in unseen forces, she defied the constraints of her dusty prison garb. In the quiet confines of

her own mind, she conjured an image of her son, his tiny face crinkling in a smile. And then, a miracle. Milk, a testament to the unbreakable bond between mother and child, flowed freely, defying the impossible distance. Across the desert, miles away, her son, guided by an unseen force, found solace in the milk that flowed from his mother's heart, a silent, nourishing embrace transcending the harsh realities of their separation.

## **Prisoner**

He spent eleven years in Zionist captivity on charges of major sabotage, because he fired several bullets at a camp of Zionist soldiers. He entered there as a child driven by enthusiasm and a pure, innocent desire to bear witness and liberate Palestine from the shackles of slavery. He emerged as dean of prisoners with a militant thought in the school of Arab sacrifice for the Palestinian cause

He did not find anyone waiting for him when he left prison. He believed that none of his family members and friends were allowed to enter the occupied Palestinian territories to receive him. He waited impatiently to meet them on the borders of his homeland and find them gathered, waiting for his auspicious and victorious return with patience and persistence in the attempts to enslave him. And defeat him.

But he did not find anyone waiting for him except a handful of his brothers and some of his close friends. Their number does not exceed the fingers of one hand. He was surprised by the absence of people from meeting the dean of the Palestinian prisoners. They were in the streets in large crowds, rushing to the city's airport to receive an Arab dancer, lame in spirit and foot, to receive her as a heroine, because she danced semi-naked for some world presidents, including Zionist leaders. At the sports summit, she danced a continuous Arab dance, resembling... The folds of a snake

that strangles a rabbit. He could hear them in the street saying that this dancer had honored the Arabs with her beautiful art and her transparent dress that cast her flesh and body in the faces of those who met her.

He sat on the sidewalk alone, tired and defeated, feeling as if he was still in captivity. Eleven summers bloomed and wilted beyond the bars, each sunrise a mocking reminder of stolen freedom.

He slumped onto the sidewalk, the weight of their misplaced adoration crushing him. The echoes of their cheers mocked his sacrifice. He felt the phantom bars of his cage closing in, the taste of freedom, bitter ashes on his tongue. The prison may have released him, but true freedom, it seemed, remained tantalizingly out of reach.

## Birthday

It's her sixteenth birthday. It is a bell of sadness that rings in the coldness of her frightened soul. There was no party, no candy, no gift, and no celebration waiting for her. It was not youth, beauty, dreams and joy that awaited her, but what awaited her in her home. The ancient captive city of **Nazareth**<sup>1</sup> is issued by the unjust Zionist law that prevents the children of Palestinian prisoners and prisoners from visiting their detained fathers and mothers if they reach the age of sixteen.

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<sup>1</sup>- **Nazareth** :(/'næzərəθ/ NAZ-ər-əθ; romanized: an-Nāṣira; Hebrew: נָצְרַת, romanized: Nāṣərat; Syriac: ܢܨܪܬܐ, romanized: Naṣrath) is the largest city in the Northern District . In 2022 its population was 78,007. Nazareth serves as a cultural, political, religious, economic and commercial center for the Arab citizens Known as "the Arab capital it is also a center of Arab and Palestinian nationalism.The inhabitants are predominantly Arab citizens of whom 69% are Muslim and 30.9% Christian. The city also commands immense religious significance, deriving from its status as the hometown of Jesus, the central figure of Christianity and a prophet in Islam.

Findings unearthed in the neighboring Qafzeh Cave show that the area around Nazareth was populated in the prehistoric period. Nazareth was a Jewish village during the Roman and Byzantine periods and is described in the New Testament as the childhood home of Jesus.It became an important city during the Crusades after Tancred established it as the capital of the Principality of Galilee. The city declined under Mamluk rule, and following the Ottoman conquest, the city's Christian residents were expelled, only to return once Fakhr ad-Dīn II granted them permission to do so. In the 18th century, Zahir al-Umar transformed Nazareth into a large town by encouraging immigration to it. The city grew steadily during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when European powers invested in the construction of churches, monasteries, educational and health facilities. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazareth>

Each flicker casting long, dancing shadows on the cold, bare walls. A stark contrast to the warmth her heart craved. No balloons, no cake, no excited chatter. Just the suffocating silence of absence.

This wasn't the birthday she dreamt of. No joyous friends, no overflowing presents, only the gnawing ache of loss. As per the cruel law. A lifetime sentence for him, fighting for their homeland's freedom, now equated to a lifetime sentence of her own - one devoid of his presence.

Yet, she refused to surrender to this injustice. Donning her only "special occasion" dress, a symbol of hope amidst despair, she lit a single candle. A solitary beacon in the desolate landscape of her day. With eyes squeezed shut, a single wish, one that echoed the deepest yearnings of her soul, escaped her lips. Then, a single, resolute blow, extinguishing the dancing flame.

Suddenly, a sound pierced the silence. The familiar creak of the front door. Her heart lurched. Could it be...?

Slowly, the door swung open, revealing a figure bathed in the soft glow of the dying light. Her breath hitched in her throat. Tears welled up, blurring the image before her. It couldn't be real, could it?

But it was. A tired smile stretched across his face, etched with lines of hardship but overflowing with love. He was there.

Her father. Against all odds, defying distance and unjust laws, he had come to celebrate her birthday.

In that moment, the cold walls seemed to melt away, replaced by the warmth of his embrace. This wasn't the birthday she dreamt of, but it was infinitely more. It was a birthday filled with the most precious gift of all - the unwavering love of a father, defying the world just to be with his daughter. The flame of hope rekindled, brighter than any birthday candle.

## **Nudity**

Her lineage stretched back centuries; a tapestry woven with religious devotion. The Quran flowed from her tongue, memorized since childhood. The hijab, a shield of faith, had adorned her for as long as she could remember. Her beauty, a secret never revealed, a treasure unseen by any man, relative or stranger.

Her guiding light was her grandmother, a woman of unwavering faith. Prayers for protection echoed from her lips, day and night. She was a leader, revered by a renowned Sufi order. Yet, fate had dealt a cruel hand. The one man who dared to break through the veil of her seclusion, to propose, was silenced by an enemy's bullet during a fiery demonstration. Thus, the precious gem remained hidden, a flicker of light veiled within the deep, protective shell of her family home.

But now she stands before the Zionist Investigation Committee since they arrested her in a martyrdom operation that ended in failure, and they practiced various types of torture on her, and what they achieved was her determination and steadfastness, and finally these soldiers wanted to torture her with a weapon, stripping a shy Muslim woman in front of a herd of pigs. They thought... they would break the power of her proud spirit if they blew her cover.

Bare as the earth they coveted, she stood, a sculpture of defiance. The wind, a witness to their barbarity, whispered through the rents in her spirit. The leeches, both human and feral, feasted on her ravaged form, but their hunger could not extinguish the fire that burned within. Unashamed, she became the embodiment of the land itself, a defiant spirit forever bound to the soil they sought to steal.

## Heart

The prison director - the Zionist general - decided to kill the young Palestinian prisoner in order to steal his healthy heart, to give it to his Zionist brother, who had been bedridden for years with no hope of enjoying good health, and to transplant a heart into his chest instead of his defective heart, so that life and hope could resume.

Ever since he saw that captive Palestinian young man coming from Mount Hebron, who was proud of his health, freshness, and activity, he had dreamed of attacking his heart to tear it from his chest and plant it in the heart of his brother - Baruch.

Finally, he achieved his dream and stole the Palestinian heart from its owner's chest, just as he stole Palestine and its safe and peaceful people before.

Everything was prepared for him. The Palestinian young man was buried by the Zionist army under the pretext that he was a terrorist, and his body should not be handed over to his family for fear of any commando operations in retaliation for his death. The medical staff at the Zionist Hospital in the city of Tel al-Rabi', which they call Tel Aviv, was on alert. To perform a heart transplant after the stolen heart arrives

Everything went according to the Zionist general's plan, and his brother's body welcomed the stolen heart, and after a few days the blush of life covered his brother's cheeks, who woke

up after a short coma that took over him after a long and complicated operation to replace the Palestinian boy's heart with his defective, rusty heart.

The thief general and everyone around him smiled at the young Zionist who had returned to life with a Palestinian heart. He opened his eyes to life with suffocating joy.

The general asked his brother impatiently: “Baruch, my beloved brother, are you okay?”

The young Zionist responded with astonishment and condemnation to what he heard: I am not Baruch; I am Jamil Al-Khalili. why I am here? Who are you? I have to leave this place to go to pray at the Ibrahimi Mosque.

## Sperm

Souad's path to motherhood was an arduous one. Years of displacement, imprisonment for both her and her husband, and the stark reality of separation presented formidable obstacles. However, through an unconventional medical intervention facilitated by her doctor at the vaccination hospital, a single sperm sample was successfully retrieved from her husband while incarcerated.

The retrieval process, necessitated by the presence of witnesses, was unorthodox but necessary. Despite significant cell death, a few sperm survived dehydration and freezing, ultimately fertilizing Souad's egg and initiating a pregnancy.

This lone survivor, a testament to perseverance, defied the odds. It journeyed through hostile conditions, ultimately finding life within Souad's womb. This new life, named Ammar, became a symbol of defiance against the Zionist prison. and swore to carry his father's flag as the Palestinian flag flies high. He embodied a continuation of the father's presence, a promise of a future that wouldn't be extinguished.

Souad, now carrying Ammar, found solace in this victory. She held him aloft for the prison guards to see, a silent challenge to their attempt to sever parental bonds. A triumphant smile played on her lips. Ammar, a bridge across the miles of separation, carried the hope of a reunion. He promised a future where a strong, resilient man, much like his father, would await him at the prison gates - a father ready to embrace his son after a quarter-century of separation.



# ***Refugee Camp***

## ***Melodies***



## **The Path**

The dust swirled around his ankles, a constant companion on this road of uncertainty. He was just a boy then, clinging to his father's hand, eyes wide with a confusion that mirrored the chaos around them. It was 1948, the year the ground beneath their feet turned to ash. His father, a whirlwind of motion, dragged him, his brothers, and whatever furniture they could salvage from the wreckage of their life.

"Where are we going, Dad?" he'd asked, his voice barely a whisper against the cacophony of fleeing people and collapsing buildings. His father's response was a curt, "We don't know." A terrifying lack of knowledge that settled in the boy's stomach like a stone.

Now, years etched lines on his face, the furrows mirroring the hardships endured. He was the one gripping hands, twin sons clutching at him with the same wide-eyed fear he remembered. But this time, it was 1967. Another exodus, another wound ripped open. The bloody events of the time echoed in the screams that tore through the air. One son, his voice small and trembling, broke through the haze of fear. "Where are we going, Dad.?"

A smile, brittle as autumn leaves dancing in the wind, graced his father's face. It was a smile laced with bitter truth. "We leave one camp," he rasped, "only to find another." The words hung heavy in the air; a grim prophecy whispered against the backdrop of their uncertain future.

## **Tal Al-Zaatar:**

The image of death, once a foreign concept, had become tragically familiar. Fear, a phantom once, had dissolved into a dull ache. What fear could remain when countless faces - beloved, familiar - had been etched into her memory as lifeless masks? She didn't think death had such brutal forms of barbarism on humans. The gangs attacking Tal al-Zaatar camp worked hard to invent the most horrific ways to kill Palestinians without guilt or crime, because they were on the agenda of liquidating a party for purely political reasons.

She no longer cares about images of death. She waits for him without fear. She's not afraid of those gang monsters. All that mattered now was the single, desperate hope: a single jar of water to quench the parched throats of her mother and sisters.

But water, the very essence of life, had become a deadly gamble. Every drop was guarded by the chilling gaze of snipers and the chaotic symphony of gunfire. The wells, once life-giving veins, now ran crimson, a gruesome testament to those who had perished in their quest for sustenance. They wiped out countless relatives, neighbors, and friends before her eyes.

Bringing a jar of water was impossible under the bullets of snipers and the gunfights of the gangs. The water wells are filled with the blood of Palestinian martyrs who were determined to deliver water to their families.

She bets her life on a jar of water. She takes risks and hides her sad little heart from the eyes of snipers. She stumbles upon the bodies of the martyrs of the camp's people.

Finally, a fallen figure, not monster, not enemy, but simply another soul consumed by the arid cruelty of the siege. Tears streamed down her face as she knelt beside the still form, her cupped hands collecting the precious drops before they surrendered to the thirsty earth. This meager offering, stained with sacrifice, was all she had to offer her family, a testament to the indomitable spirit that still flickered amidst the ruins of hope.

## **Hanzala**

Haunted by generations of exile, he carried the weight of misery like an inherited curse. Humiliation became his armor, forced upon him by circumstance. He inherited misery from his fathers and grandfathers. He also inherited from them a life of exile. He forced himself into camp life and humiliation. He thought that luck favored his older brother, who inherited the fatherly role from their father, who was crushed by illness and misery until he died without a body. So, he was able to build a warehouse. When he was a young child, he called it home away from the camp in a remote area on the outskirts of the city where he had lived as a refugee. His mother, brothers, wife, and his wife's mother, who lived with them, were crammed into it.

But within the hallowed halls of learning, whispers turned into jeers. His origin, a scarlet letter branding him in the eyes of his peers. Though no less intelligent, capable, or deserving, he became a target, their ignorance fueling their malice

The school students kept making fun of him because he was a Palestinian coming from the camp.

He met their taunts with silence, a shield forged in quiet defiance. Shoes cast aside, he turned his back, refusing to acknowledge their barbs. Shame, a cloak once worn heavily, now lay discarded, replaced by a quiet dignity. His very

presence, unbowed and unbroken, became a silent rebuke to their cruelty; He took off his shoes and turned his back to them. He no longer cared about their presence, responded to their insults, or was ashamed of his Palestinian accent. He wrote on the blackboard hanging on the wall: “Hanzala is angry now”.

## Picture

Flames devoured the camp, casting an orange glow on the faces etched with terror. In the midst of the chaos, a mother clutched a tattered photo book, its worn leather cover offering a stark contrast to the carnage around them. Within its pages, a lifetime of stolen moments, children's smiles frozen in time, a defiant flicker of normalcy against the encroaching darkness. These were her treasures; all she could salvage from a world collapsing. Escape. The word hammered in her skull, a frantic drumbeat urging her forward. But where? Every path led into the unknown, a labyrinth of dangers unseen. The weight of three tiny lives pressed against her trembling legs, their fear a cold fist squeezing her heart. Yet, before the question of direction could fully bloom, a gunshot shattered the night. The world dissolved into a crimson haze, the mother's burden lifted, not by escape, but by a brutal finality.

In the ashes of the massacre, only the youngest daughter remained, a single teardrop tracing a path down a soot-streaked cheek. Her tiny hand clutched the photo book, the only legacy of a mother's love, a fragile testament to a life stolen, and a beacon of hope in the face of unimaginable loss.

The world had become a labyrinth, each twist and turn revealing only more desolation. Seven sunrises had bled into sunsets, each painting the sky in hues of despair. The young

girl, once vibrant and full of laughter, now resembled a wisp of smoke, clinging desperately to the edges of existence.

Exhaustion became her unwelcome companion, its heavy cloak pulling her down. She sought solace in the long grass fringing a forgotten sewer grate, a meager shelter offering no comfort, only a brief reprieve from the relentless sun. Her heart, a fragile bird trapped in a cage of grief, fluttered weakly as she tore through the pages of her notebook. Each picture, once a cherished memory, now a haunting reminder of all that was lost. The faces of loved ones, frozen in smiles, crumbled under the relentless onslaught of tears.

Only one remained, a stark contrast to the others. Her own reflection, stained with the crimson testament of the massacre, stared back at her. It was a reflection she both loathed and clung to - a stark reminder of survival in the face of utter devastation. Carefully, she folded the bloodied image, tucking it away in the depths of her pocket, a token of resilience amidst the wreckage of her world.

## **A Farm Chicken**

He cherished a life as peaceful as a summer pond. He harbored a paralyzing fear – a tetraphobia of death, conflict, torture, and any form of confrontation. This terror kept him firmly on the sidelines of life. He wouldn't dare participate in any act of resistance, choosing instead the path of a farm chicken – timid, cautious, easily startled. Yet, this unwavering commitment to cowardice didn't grant him immunity. The iron fist of authority slammed down just the same. One day, he found himself plucked from his quiet existence, tossed into a cage alongside his very people, the ones he'd watched from the safe haven of his fear. Now, surrounded by those who dared to fight, the man who lived like a chicken, had to confront the consequences of his own inaction.

His plan was to maintain his cowardice until he got out of prison safely, but once the Palestinian Fedayeen took over his education, they made him a real man worthy of being Palestinian.

The prison gates groaned open, spitting him back onto the unforgiving streets. he wasn't a free man, not yet. He was a man possessed, fueled by a white-hot rage that burned brighter than the midday sun. The years spent staring at cold concrete had hardened him, forged a determination tempered

in anger. He wasn't searching for freedom, he was hunting. His enemy, the one who stole his life, awaited.

For the first time, he didn't hunch, didn't shrink into the shadows. He threw back his head, a gesture both defiant and exhilarating. No longer did he resemble a caged bird, content to peck at the ground. This city, once his tormentor, now stretched before him like a vast hunting ground. He was the apex predator, a predator with a score to settle. The defeated man who shuffled into prison years ago was gone. In his place, a predator with the focused gaze of an eagle scanned his new domain, ready to claim his vengeance.

## The last fight

The man was a blur of motion, his ragged breaths the only soundtrack to his frantic flight. Tucked securely in his arms, a little girl with hair like spun moonlight clung on, her once vibrant face now pale and drawn. He couldn't explain, not to the curious eyes that followed him on deserted roads, not to the ghosts that chased him in every shadow. Every spare ounce of energy fueled his desperate escape, leading him further away from the sight of humanity.

His destination remained shrouded, a shimmering mirage in the desert of his despair. He only knew he had to keep running, his arms burning with the weight of his precious cargo, until he found a haven where he could finally lower her, finally let go.

Days bled into one another, a relentless marathon fueled by grief and a gnawing, inescapable guilt. **The Yarmouk camp**<sup>1</sup>, a festering wound in his memory, haunted him.

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<sup>1</sup>- **Yarmouk:** is a 2.11-square-kilometer (520-acre) district of the city of Damascus, populated by Palestinians. It is located 8 kilometers (5.0 mi) from the center of Damascus and within municipal boundaries; this was not the case when it was established in 1957. It contains hospitals and schools. Yarmouk is an "unofficial" refugee camp, as UNRWA rejected a Syrian government request to recognize the camp in 1960. Now depopulated, it was previously home to the largest Palestinian refugee community in Syria. As of June 2002, there had been 112,550 registered refugees living in Yarmouk. During the Syrian Civil War, Yarmouk camp became the scene of intense fighting in 2012 between the Free Syrian Army and the PFLP-GC, supported by Syrian government forces. The camp then was consequently taken over by various factions and was deprived

Images of slow human decay – hunger etched on faces, disease stealing life's vibrancy – flickered behind his exhausted eyes.

He hadn't fled out of cowardice; he'd left to save his wife, his seven fragile flames. But fate, a cruel puppeteer, had snatched them away. Flight, homelessness, hunger – they'd all become grim companions on their desperate escape, stealing their lives one by one. The weight of their Palestinian identity, a heavy cloak upon their shoulders, offered no solace. Only the echo of their silenced laughter remained, a constant accusation in the quiet of his pounding heart.

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of supplies, resulting in hunger, diseases and a high death rate, which caused many to flee. By the end of 2014, the camp population had gone down to just 20,000 residents. In early April 2015, most of the Yarmouk camp was overrun by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, sparking armed clashes with Palestinian militia Aknaf Bait al-Maqdis. At this point, the population was estimated at 18,000. After intense fighting in April/May 2018, Syrian government forces took the camp, its population now reduced to just 100–200. It is estimated that 160,000 Palestinians were displaced and forced to flee the Yarmouk refugee camp against their will during the Syrian civil war. Many Palestinians raised concerns that the Syrian regime may want to redevelop the area for use by Syrians. There have been suggestions within Syria to relocate the Palestinians to remote scrubland. As of 2022, Palestinians have begun to return, but the population remains far from its pre-war peak.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarmouk\\_Camp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarmouk_Camp)

The Yarmouk camp, once a place of bustling life and shared dreams, now loomed in his memory like a desolate graveyard. It was there, amidst the crumbling buildings and hollow streets, that he'd witnessed humanity stripped bare, succumbing to a slow and agonizing death – hunger gnawing at their bellies, thirst cracking their lips, despair dimming their eyes. It was a tableau of suffering etched permanently onto his soul.

The skeletal branches overhead offered a mocking canopy of bareness, the forest clinging to its final grasp of winter. A small river, icy and unforgiving, snaked through the undergrowth, the final barrier to their destination. He, a man etched with exhaustion, knelt at its bank, the weight of his burden heavier than the ragged pack on his back. His daughter, a wisp of a girl, nestled against him, her body wracked with coughs that echoed eerily in the stillness.

His heart, a leaden weight in his chest, pounded a frantic rhythm against his ribs. Hunger gnawed at his insides; a dull ache easily ignored compared to the fear gnawing at his soul. Time, a luxury they couldn't afford, was running out. Reaching the other side, reaching help, was the only thought that propelled him forward.

He waded in, the frigid water numbing his legs with each agonizing step. Ignoring the bite of the cold, he focused on the warmth radiating from the small form clinging to him. Her breaths, shallow gasps against the rushing water, were the only sounds that mattered. He pushed on, fueled by a desperate hope that flickered within him like a dying ember.

His muscles screamed, his vision blurring at the edges, but he kept moving. He wouldn't let go. He couldn't. Finally, his feet touched the muddy bank on the other side. Relief, a bittersweet sensation, washed over him as he collapsed on the ground, his daughter cradled in his numb arms.

He checked for her breath, his own ragged gasps a counterpoint to the silence around him. A faint rise and fall of her chest, a testament to her fragile hold on life, filled him with a surge of exhausted hope. He slumped beside her, his body surrendering to the weight of their ordeal. death, a thief in the night, stole over him, a cruel comfort in the face of their uncertain reality, unveiled a heart-wrenching tableau. The man lay still, his face etched with the peace of a man who had fought his last fight.

## **Ain al-Hilweh camp<sup>1</sup>**

The clatter of metal and the dusty air of the Ain al-Hilweh camp in Lebanon were the backdrop for their unlikely meeting. He, with kind Lebanese words, tried his hand at flirting. Her response? A torrent of insults, delivered with a fiery spirit that captivated him. He saw beauty, not in the weapons she carried for a cause close to her heart, but in the spark, it ignited within her. Beneath the rough camouflage of a Palestinian guerrilla cub, he knew there was a heart that held tenderness and compassion. A heart, perhaps, that dreamt of weaving flower crowns in rice steppes instead of wielding weapons. It was this hidden sweetness that earned her the nickname "the sweet one."

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<sup>1</sup>- **Ein El Hilweh camp** is located south of Saida in south Lebanon. It is the largest Palestine Refugee camp in Lebanon. The camp's inhabitants originally came in 1948, mostly from coastal Palestinian towns. The camp also hosts a large number of Palestine Refugees displaced from other parts of Lebanon, particularly from Tripoli, who came to Ein El Hilweh during the Lebanese civil war and in the aftermath of the Nahr el-Bared conflict in 2007. The ongoing Syria crisis has also led to the additional presence of Syrian refugees and Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) in the camp.

Security and governance in the camp are the responsibility of Popular Committees and Palestinian Factions. The camp is surrounded by a wall and access for people and building materials is controlled by the Lebanese Armed Forces through checkpoints. Last updated July

2023. <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/ein-el-hilweh-camp>

Marriage. He proposed, and she, with a laugh that mocked his gentle ways, accepted. Her eyes, though, saw the strength beneath his kindness, the resolve of a man determined. She teased him about his love for her, yet privately reveled in the fact that this handsome, blond had fallen for her. He, in turn, dreamt of a child – their child – who would inherit her fiery spirit and stubborn defiance.

But duty called. With a heavy heart, she abandoned him, the pull of armed struggle in Palestine too strong to resist. He felt no anger, no betrayal. He understood; she was bound to a greater love, a love for her homeland. Picking up his own weapon, a newfound resolve hardened his gaze. He would follow her, fight by her side, and maybe, just maybe, become the father of a child as brave and stubborn as the "sweet one" who had stolen his heart.

## **Aisha colors**

Aisha, their beloved art teacher, was a beacon of vibrancy in the bleakness of Yarmouk camp. Her classes were splashes of color in a world drained of hope. When poverty stole the children's chance to own crayons and paper, Aisha shouldered the burden, buying supplies so they could unleash their creativity. But Aisha wasn't just about art; she painted a picture of life beyond the camp's harsh reality. With every stroke, she taught them to see beauty where it seemed non-existent.

One day, Aisha promised to return with much-needed food and medicine. The children, brimming with trust, eagerly awaited their "Miss Aisha Colors." But days turned into weeks, and their teacher remained absent. The truth, a cruel shard of reality, pierced their hopeful bubble. Aisha, their lifeline, had been arrested for smuggling supplies into the besieged camp. The soldiers, monsters devoid of compassion, tortured her relentlessly.

Though Aisha's body may have succumbed, her spirit remained etched in their hearts. They refused to accept her demise. In a defiant act of faith, they transformed the school wall into a canvas. There, with vibrant strokes, they painted Aisha – a smile gracing her lips, eyes filled with unwavering determination. She wasn't a victim, but a symbol of hope – a testament to the enduring power of a promise, a teacher, and

the unwavering belief of her students. Every day, they awaited her return, their artwork a silent promise – they would hold onto hope, just as firmly as she held onto her appointment with them.

## **Palestinian**

There is no known justification or reason for his torture other than the fact that he is Palestinian. As a child, he'd been fed stories of a stolen homeland, a gaping wound in his young heart. Growing up, misery became his constant companion. His father, the prime of his life draining away just to feed the family, his older sister crippled by a foot she couldn't afford to heal. Their lives were confined to a squalid tin shack, a festering sore on the muddy, stinking outskirts of their stolen land.

because he was Palestinian, he learned young the bitter lessons of that life: hunger, the gnawing emptiness in his stomach. The sting of cold, the lack of clothes to shield him. And worst of all, the ever-present shadow of violence. He'd witnessed his own people slaughtered; their dreams extinguished forever. His memory was a graveyard, filled with martyrs, the dead, the vanished, the displaced, the imprisoned, and those simply gone, their return an increasingly distant hope.

because he was Palestinian, hope itself had become a frayed thread. Leaving this wasteland held no allure. Yet, when the camp administration, in a cruel twist, confiscated his small kiosk – his one meager attempt at dignity – claiming it marred the camp's "civilized face," a wave of shame threatened to drown him. He wanted to scream, to rage at the injustice, but tears came instead, the sting of humiliation hot on his cheeks. Crying, he realized, was a luxury he couldn't afford. It wasn't the life he'd chosen, but it was the life he was forced to endure.

## **Pride**

Rain or shine, mud pooled or dust swirling, the younger brother's daily duty remained constant: carrying his elder brother's polished black shoes. These shoes, a collective family purchase, were a symbol of their eldest son's government job, their lifeline. The little brother felt no shame in his mud-caked shoes, a constant reminder of the camp that housed them. This camp, ever-present, overflowed them with its seasonal struggles.

The elder brother was their salvation. His meager salary fed them all, allowing their father to rest his weary back – no more backbreaking labor hauling crowbars at the wheat market on the camp's outskirts.

Today, however, a different kind of burden fell on the elder brother's shoulders. He, the proud peacock, donned his only black suit, a stark contrast to his tired brown shoes. He strode forth, long, purposeful strides, leaving the younger brother to follow with quiet dignity and a surprising sense of pride. Their destination: the bus stop in the heart of the camp.

There, from the bus window, the transfer of power occurred. Old, muddy shoes tossed down; pristine black ones retrieved. The elder brother slipped them on, careful not to let the camp's grime taint his work attire.

With a wave, the bus swallowed him, and the younger brother headed back, a strange happiness blooming in his chest. He, too, had a role to play in this daily ritual, a ritual that determined their fate. Would their eldest son find a morsel to bring home if he continued his climb, or would a single stain from the camp's mud lead to their downfall? The younger brother carried that question, heavy yet strangely hopeful, back to their camp home.

## **Ration Card<sup>1</sup>**

The summer sun blazed down on the dusty refugee camp, and a young boy dreamt of escaping its heat - not just physically, but also in style. He craved new clothes, a crisp shirt, and a sleek leather bag to replace the worn canvas one his mother lovingly, but frustratingly, made from an old dress. The canvas bag, though a symbol of his mother's care, felt cumbersome, a constant reminder of their limited resources.

Finding work within the camp proved impossible. Here, everyone was struggling, and a small, slight boy like him was just another mouth to feed. So, he ventured out, his heart pounding with a mixture of hope and trepidation. Shop after shop, he presented his case, only to be met with polite dismissal. His small stature and youthful features didn't inspire confidence in potential employers.

Then, a glimmer of hope. A kindly-looking old merchant, his skin an unusual shade of blue, listened with a smile. The boy poured his heart out, explaining how desperately he needed a job. But a flicker of doubt crossed the merchant's face. "Palestinian, are you?" he asked, his smile fading. The

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<sup>1</sup>- **Ration Card:** Issued by aid organizations or the camp administration. It doesn't necessarily prove identity, but shows a family's eligibility to receive basic supplies, typically food and sometimes medicine. It helps manage the distribution of limited resources within the camp.

boy, confused, insisted he was. The merchant, however, seemed unconvinced.

Determined to prove himself, the boy raced back home. He didn't have an ID card, but there was something else - his family's ration card, a meager proof of their Palestinian identity and their dependence on aid. Panting, he presented the card, his heart pounding with renewed hope.

The merchant's smile vanished completely. With a look of disdain, he shoved the card to the ground. "This proves you're nothing but a Palestinian beggar," he sneered. "Get out of here!"

The weight of the merchant's words crushed the boy's spirit. He scooped up the card, his fist clenching not in anger, but to protect the precious document that ensured his family's survival. Tears welled in his eyes, but he blinked them back, unwilling to give the merchant the satisfaction of seeing him cry.

He trudged back to the camp, the summer sun mirroring the burning ache in his heart. The dream of new clothes and a leather bag seemed to melt away in the harsh reality. The summer vacation, a time for freedom and fun, had become a battle for something far more basic - the dignity of work. Tears pricked the boy's eyes, but he swallowed them down, his small fist clenching the card. He couldn't afford to lose it - it meant food for his family. He hurried away; the

weight of the merchant's words heavier than the card in his hand. He didn't get the job, but the encounter left a deeper wound than rejection. It was a cruel reminder of the prejudice that clung to his identity, an invisible mark deeper than any visible proof he could offer.

## **The camp**

The dust swirled around her ankles, a constant companion in this endless journey of displacement. But this time, the familiar dread that settled in her stomach wasn't about packing meager belongings and fleeing in the dead of night. This time, she wouldn't run. Each camp had been a fresh wound, a new loss. A piece of her spirit chipped away with every forced exodus. Her family, once vibrant and whole, had shrunk to just her two children and the ghost of her husband – his commando uniform a constant, haunting reminder in the small, bare room they called home.

She had endured the deprivations, the relentless persecution, all for these two fragile lives clinging to her. Now, the storm brewing outside wasn't rain, but the promise of bloodshed. A preordained game of violence, displacement, death, they called it.

Who the attackers were, their religion, nationality, their cause – it was all a blur. In the face of death, such labels were meaningless. Death, it seemed, had chosen them as its instruments. She wouldn't let her children become pawns in this macabre game. She wouldn't let them die in this hell on earth.

With a fierce resolve that surprised even herself, she shut the flimsy door behind her children, the only shield she could

offer. Then, she joined the desperate throng outside, a mother transformed.

The fight was primal, a raw dance of survival on the dusty canvas of the camp. Her husband's uniform, oversized and heavy, became a badge of defiance. His rifle, cold against her skin, became an extension of her maternal will. This wasn't just about protecting her own; it was about shielding every child, every mother within these tattered walls. They fought with the desperation of cornered enemy; their limbs fueled by a mother's fury.

This time, displacement held no power over her. This time, she would defend her children, her home, and the fragile hope they clung to in a world teetering on the edge. Each breath she drew felt carved from stone, a betrayal of the two sets of eyes begging her not to leave. Stepping outside, she joined the desperate symphony of pounding feet and desperate shouts. There, mother's instinct morphed into a feral thing. Her limbs moved like pistons, fists like hammers driving back the encroaching darkness.

Every blow, every kick aimed at the grotesque figures before her, fueled by the image of her children, safe but scared, behind that closed door. The sound swallowing the whimpers of her children, the battle raged, a whirlwind of screams and clashing metal. Blood, both hers and others', painted a crimson tapestry across the battlefield. The deafening roar of an explosion sent her flying, shrapnel tearing into her flesh.

But through the haze of pain, one thought remained – her children.

Evening cast a weary light over the ravaged camp. She stumbled back through the same heavy door, the haven she fought for, now a sanctuary stained with her own struggle. There, bathed in the fading light, sat her children. Relief and exhaustion warred within her. Collapsing onto the cold floor, she pulled them into a desperate embrace. Tears, hot and salty, mingled with the grime of combat as a mother, warrior, and survivor finally gave way to the raw ache of love and fear. In their shared sobs, the weight of the world eased, held at bay for now by the simple act of holding on.

## **Punishment**

The young woman stood outside the principal's office, anticipation bubbling in her chest. Winning second place in the national poetry competition was a small victory, but a significant one for a Palestinian refugee like her. Recognition, even a glimmer of it, felt precious.

But when the principal emerged, her face contorted in a sneer, the anticipation curdled into dread. Her mocking gaze swept over her, the words that spilled from her lips dripping with venom. "Are you really Palestinian, girl?" Her voice hissed, a serpent's accusation in the sterile air.

The question struck like a physical blow. It was an accusation she'd faced before, a constant reminder of the invisible mark branded upon her. Yet, this time, it came from within the very institution that was supposed to celebrate her achievement. Her voice, usually vibrant, faltered, a single, desperate phrase escaping her lips, "But I have a nationality..." Her response was a venomous laugh. "Nationality? You, a Palestinian? Fool! Leave this school and don't return unless you bring your guardian." Each word was a shard of ice, piercing her heart.

As she stumbled out of the office, she felt like the ground beneath her had vanished. The weight of the accusation threatened to drown her. She clutched at the thin thread of hope that the principal didn't know she lived in the refugee

camp, a place where overt displays of Palestinian identity could ignite a dangerous fire. The very thought sent shivers down her spine.

The walk home was a blur. But amidst the swirling confusion, gratitude flickered like a tiny flame. Thankful the principal wasn't aware of the camp, a sanctuary that could become a prison for her identity. The burden remained, heavy and oppressive, but the young woman held onto that sliver of gratitude, a reminder that even in the face of prejudice, a flicker of hope could persist.

## **Luxuries**

The UNRWA representative's voice droned on about overcoming hunger through sacrifice, his words a stark contrast to the vibrant images displayed on the screen. Before their hungry eyes, a parade of luxurious foods – glistening fruits, succulent meats, and exotic desserts – danced across the screen, a cruel display of abundance in a world of scarcity.

These were foods the children had never seen, let alone tasted. Their camp, a labyrinth of rusty shacks, knew only the monotony of meager rations and the gnawing emptiness of unfulfilled desires. The images, a sensory overload, ignited a bittersweet longing in their young hearts – a yearning for a taste of the unknown, a world beyond their limited reality.

The irony was not lost on them. As the lecture progressed, a strange selection process unfolded. The UNRWA representative, himself a man of considerable girth, along with the camp's teachers – all carrying the physical signs of relative comfort – were asked to leave. Their presence, it seemed, was deemed a "luxury" that could potentially disrupt the message of sacrifice.

Left alone, the children exchanged silent glances, their eyes reflecting a mixture of confusion and resentment. The lecture continued, extolling the virtues of bland, repetitive meals

prepared with soybean oil, a poor substitute for the delicacies that had just tantalized their taste buds.

The children listened, their small bodies yearning for something more, something substantial, something that resembled the food they'd just glimpsed on the screen. The lecture, meant to inspire, only amplified the stark reality of their existence – a world where even the most basic desires were classified as luxuries, and where even the act of dreaming seemed like a forbidden indulgence.

## **Violon**

In Yarmouk, death cast a long shadow, a shroud suffocating the camp. No food, water, or safety remained. The once vibrant community fractured, replaced by scattered ruins, the echo of bombs, and the chilling presence of soldiers who offered no salvation.

He, a resident of this besieged world, felt the weight of despair press down. Black hands lurked at the camp's edges, snatching souls and condemning them to the horrors of distant detention camps. His beloved camp, why was it a pawn in the cruel game of war?

His heart ached with the ghosts of loved ones. His mother, succumbed to illness, silenced by the absence of medicine. His sister's children, withered by the lack of food, their laughter silenced forever. And Zainab, his love, stolen by the night, her body dumped like unwanted trash outside the camp walls.

Thirst now joined the symphony of suffering. Days bled into nights, the sun a merciless tyrant, offering no respite. Water, a distant memory, a phantom tormenting parched throat.

He refused to succumb to their orchestrated demise. A different end, a death on his own terms, not at the hands of the monsters besieging them. Stepping into the wasteland, he held his violin, a cherished instrument bought by the collective effort of his family. He had learned to play through

sheer determination, guided by the fleeting lessons of a Palestinian musician who once visited, a citizen of a world far removed from their suffering. The violin sang, a sorrowful melody echoing the thirst that gnawed at them all. It was his requiem, his defiance, his chosen journey into the unknown. He poured his heart into the music; each note a testament to their collective struggle.

And then, a miracle unfolded. As the sun reached its zenith, scorching the earth, the sky, which had mocked them with its emptiness, began to weep. Raindrops, like a divine intervention, fell upon the parched land. The music stopped; its purpose served. He looked around, his eyes filled with a newfound hope, a reflection of the glistening drops on their faces.

The camp, once a symbol of despair, held the promise of a new dawn. The rain, a melody of hope, composing a future where survival was not just defiance, but a testament to the enduring spirit of humanity.

## **Nahr Al-Bared<sup>1</sup>**

In Nahr al-Bared, the air tasted of ash and betrayal. Smoke billowed from what was once his home – a towering red brick haven for his family, built with years of sweat and sacrifice. Now, just another casualty in the bloody conflict, his life's dream lay in smoldering ruins.

Dreams, years of exile, and the pain of displacement – everything crumbled before his eyes. Two words echoed in the hollow space left by his lost home: conspiracy and betrayal.

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<sup>1</sup>- **Nahr al-Bared**: is a Palestinian refugee camp located in northern Lebanon, about 16 kilometers from the city of Tripoli. It is situated near the Mediterranean Sea and was established in 1962. The camp is home to around 30,000 displaced Palestinians and their descendants. It has been the site of several clashes between Palestinian militants and the Lebanese Army, most notably in 2007, which resulted in the destruction of much of the camp. The camp has since been rebuilt, but many of the residents continue to face challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to basic services. Nahr al-Bared, literally: Cold River). Under the terms of the 1969 Cairo Agreement, the Lebanese Army does not conventionally enter the Palestinian camps, and internal security is provided by Palestinian factions. The camp was established in December 1949 by the League of Red Cross Societies in order to accommodate the Palestinian refugees suffering from the difficult winter conditions in the Beqaa Valley and the suburbs of Tripoli. The camp was established outside any major Lebanese towns or settlements, which left Nahr al-Bared more isolated from the Lebanese society than many of the other camps in Lebanon. Despite this, due to its position on the main road to Syria and its proximity to the Syrian border, Nahr al-Bared grew to be a central commercial hub for the local Lebanese of the Akkar region.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahr\\_al-Bared\\_refugee\\_camp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahr_al-Bared_refugee_camp).

But beneath the ashes of despair, a faint ember of defiance flickered. He limped to a wicker chair, the sun leaving its mark on his exposed foot, and lit a cigarette. No time for mourning, no space for regret. His eyes, hardened by hardship, already scanned the wreckage, not for what was lost, but for what could be salvaged.

He had built one home; he would build another. His spirit, etched with the resilience of generations of refugees, refused to be crushed. In the midst of devastation, a plan began to form, a silent vow whispered on the wind. He wouldn't let loss define him. He would rebuild, brick by brick, a New Testament to hope and the unyielding human spirit.

# ***Diaspora Melodies***



## Residency

The poem whispered in the rustle of packing bags; a lament woven into the folds of worn clothes. A few days, a cruel countdown until their forced departure. This city, a scorching exile in the heart of the Arab world, had become their unwanted home.

Here, she, a Palestinian woman with a fading identity, was a perpetual foreigner. Years ago, she gave up her rightful return to Palestine, choosing love over her homeland. Love that had turned into a desolate soul, a husband lost two months ago, his heart finally stilled by grief and years of humiliation in this unforgiving place.

She, a ghost in her own life, haunted by a lost homeland and a stolen youth. The city had devoured her husband's dreams, his dignity, and his silence in its merciless maw. With him gone, her residency, a flimsy shield, threatened to crumble too.

Doors hammered shut, pleas met with indifference. No haven in the vast world offered solace. She packed their lives into worn suitcases, a desperate preparation for an eviction disguised as a police raid. Tears, bitter and heavy, stained her cheeks as her children, her precious cargo, questioned their unknown destination.

Shame, a bitter pill, twisted in her gut. How could a mother confess she didn't know where the path would lead? The poem of departure, a chorus of sobs, echoed through their cramped quarters. The lament of arrival, a melody played on foreign soil, hung heavy in the stifling air.

## The Sea

There, in her small, isolated house in one of the narrow alleys in the **Yarmouk camp**<sup>1</sup>, she always dreamed of seeing the sea, and riding a ship swaying on its beautiful blue surface, accompanied by her family members. The sea, the ship, and the trip with her family were her watery dreams rooted in her soul, which longed for distance and the spacious sky far from the hustle and bustle of this camp, which had become narrow despite its large area.

**The Syrian civil war**<sup>2</sup> destroyed her home and the Yarmouk camp, displaced all of its people, and included her and her

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<sup>1</sup>-**Yarmouk camp**, located near Damascus, Syria, was once a vibrant community for Palestinian refugees. Established in 1957, it housed over 160,000 Palestinian refugees at its peak, making it the largest community of its kind in Syria. Sadly, the Syrian Civil War that began in 2011 had a devastating impact on Yarmouk camp. The camp became a battleground, facing sieges, occupation by various armed groups, and destruction. The passage you shared portrays the tragic consequences of the war on the residents of Yarmouk camp, forcing them to flee their homes and face perilous journeys in search of safety.

<sup>2</sup> -**The Syrian civil war**: is a complex and ongoing conflict that has devastated the country since 2011. Here's a quick breakdown: Start: March 15, 2011 Cause: Pro-democracy protests inspired by the Arab Spring met with violent suppression by the Syrian government. Main Parties: Syrian Government led by President Bashar al-Assad Various opposition groups with different ideologies, including some with extremist views International Involvement: Several countries have provided military support to different sides of the conflict, further complicating the situation. Current Status: As of March 2024, major fighting has subsided, but the conflict remains unresolved. The Assad government controls most of the country. Opposition groups hold some territory, mainly in the northwest. There are ongoing

family among the crowds of forcibly displaced people fleeing to preserve their lives and what remained of their dignity, which was lost repeatedly in this war. Because they were weak and nothing else.

And here she is now on board a ship crowded with displaced Palestinians heading to a European country. It is a ship of illegal immigrants, and here the sea is hitting their ship mercilessly, tearing its sails, and swallowing it uncontrollably, with the flavor of panic and screaming from on board without a rescuer or helper.

The sea deceived her childhood dreams. Now she discovers this painful deception too late, and he attacks her to swallow her up, just as he swallowed many of the ship's passengers before her eyes. Don't resist it, don't pray to heaven for help, rescue, or a miracle. She closes her eyes and surrenders herself completely to the sea that sends her to it, starting with her head. She still loves the sea even if it deceives and betrays her.

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humanitarian concerns and a large number of refugees. The war has had a horrific human cost: Hundreds of thousands of people killed. Millions displaced internally and as refugees. Widespread destruction of infrastructure. Severe economic hardship. The story you shared captures the personal tragedy of the war, highlighting the shattered dreams and forced displacement of ordinary people.

## **The slap**

The rhythmic clang of the ironworks hammer ceased abruptly. Shouts and angry voices pierced the hot, metallic air. He emerged, soot clinging to his sweat-streaked face, his temper a volatile mix with the furnace's heat.

Neighbours, faces pinched with righteousness, pointed fingers at his son, a small, defiant figure standing his ground.

An oral diatribe, dripping with accusations, washed over. His son, they claimed, had once again terrorized their child. Fury, a crimson tide, mirrored the iron he'd just wrestled from the furnace. He crouched before his son, the boy a stark contrast – small and dusted with coal, but defiance burning bright in his eyes. His voice, a low growl, demanded answers. The reason, it turned out, was a familiar one. The same reason fists flew at other neighbourhood children. The boy, mirroring his father's glare at the accusing neighbours, blurted, "He called me a refugee!"

A heavy slap landed on the boy's cheek, sparks flashing in his eyes. He wrestled with his own emotions; the sting of the blow meant more for himself than his son. He couldn't let the neighbours witness his weakness, his son's defiance turning to victory. The neighbours, their mission accomplished, melted away, leaving a bitter taste in his mouth.

He grabbed his son's shoulder, his grip tight enough to bruise. "Did he call you a refugee?"

"Yes," came the small, defiant voice.

Another question, a stark contrast to the previous one, hung heavy in the air. "Did you hit him hard?"

A single word, laced with defiance, met his ear. "Yes." A slow smile, a flicker of pride, replaced the anger on his face. He pulled his son close, a rough hand ruffling his hair. "Well done, son. May God bless you."

In that clangorous, stifling heat, a different kind of bond was forged. A bond born of displacement, of defiance, and a father's love that burned brighter than any furnace.

## **The Painter**

Twenty-five winters etched lines on his face, mirroring the scars on his homeland. In the frigid embrace of exile, his brush became a lifeline, weaving memories of olive groves and sun-baked earth onto canvas. Each stroke, a whispered song of longing for Palestine, a land stolen but never forgotten.

He clung to the few paintings he sold for sustenance, a meager existence in a forgotten corner. Yet, the remainder, a silent testament to his unwavering spirit, were offered as solace. Some found refuge in the hands of struggling families, others a beacon of hope for orphaned children in distant refugee camps, carrying his brother's lost dreams forward.

The chill of death crept closer, a relentless tide threatening to extinguish the embers of his only remaining wish: to return, to become one with the soil that cradled his ancestors. With each labored breath, urgency bloomed, a desperate plea to defy fate's cruel hand.

In the twilight of life, his trembling hand grasped the brush for one final masterpiece. He didn't paint the familiar landscapes of his yearning, but a doorway. A colossal portal, adorned with fragrant jasmine, mirroring the one guarding his grandfather's long-lost home. It was a bridge, a gateway to the past, a promise whispered on canvas.

As dawn painted the sky with hues of forgiveness, his life journey ended. But from his lifeless hand, a single tear rolled down, tracing the intricate details of the painted door. In that moment, a gentle breeze swept through the room, carrying with it the echo of laughter, the scent of olive trees, and the warmth of sun-drenched earth. He had crossed the threshold, his soul returning to the land it never truly left. The door closed softly behind him, a final act of solace in a life painted in exile.

## **Fish**

He was a Palestinian fisherman. he wasn't just a fisherman; the sea was his birth right. It flowed in his veins alongside the salty spray that clung to his beard. From his ancestors, he'd inherited the sturdy fishing boat, weathered nets that whispered stories of past catches, and a legacy woven from legends, schools of fish, wheeling gulls, and the rhythm of the tides.

Yet, the life he was born to felt like a cruel joke. The sea, his supposed inheritance, had cast him out. So, he, a fish out of his own water, became a nomad of the shores. He scoured bustling ports, vast seas, and endless oceans, his eyes scanning every ship that dared to breach the horizon. He was searching for the Sea, not just any sea, but the one that had spurned him, the one that held the key to his family's legacy and his own restless heart.

Unlike other Greek fishermen who, after a bad first trip, swore off the water entirely, he couldn't stay on land for long. The call of the waves echoed in his dreams, and the scent of salt clung to his clothes even when far from the coast. He was a man adrift, searching for a home that seemed determined to remain out of reach. He did not find himself far from the Gaza Sea. He joined the armed Palestinian resistance, and secretly returned to his homeland with some guerrillas. The sea was the first to cleanse its eyes from its homeland. He inhaled to fill his lungs to swallow all the sea breeze, and exhaled what he breathed, saying: Oh, the sea of Gaza.

## **swap**

Ever since the forced departure from Palestine, a single dream burned bright in his heart: to return. Every decision, every step, was a brick laid on the path home. Even his marriage to the foreign woman stemmed from this yearning. Her empathy for the Palestinian plight, her unwavering support for their cause, resonated with him.

The money he tirelessly earned in that distant land, a land separated by vast seas, mountains, and endless plains, was all in service of this singular goal. It wasn't just for him; it was for the future he envisioned. It was for his daughter, a gift from God, whom he dreamt of raising as a true Palestinian mother. It was for his son, a spark of courage and determination, a seed he longed to plant back in the fertile soil of their homeland. They were all part of the tapestry he was weaving, a tapestry woven with threads of longing and hope, all leading them back to Palestine.

The timber tycoon, a man who'd carved his fortune from ancient redwoods, stood at a crossroads. Half his wealth, a staggering sum, had vanished in a single, desperate transaction. A bribe. A price for something far more valuable than gold: his stolen birthright, a Palestinian identity ripped from him years ago. The other half? Paid to a viper in a designer dress, his foreign wife. When the truth about the cause – his homeland, his heritage – slithered out, her

affection curdled faster than spoiled milk. Money, it seemed, held more sway than any righteous cause. The world over, apparently.

With a heavy heart, he bought himself freedom. A twisted kind, paid in cold, hard cash. He bought the right to be a father, to take his two young sons, his link to the future, back where they belonged. Palestine, a land woven into the very fabric of his being, awaited. It held a sacred mission, a purpose that transcended even his immense wealth. He placed a worn leather suitcase, filled with the remnants of a life traded away, at their feet. In their wide, innocent eyes, he saw a reflection of the future – a future steeped in olive groves and ancient stories, a future where their identity wouldn't be a price tag, but a birthright.

## **The White Shoes**

For days, lost and alone, she paid the price for her cherished possession. The stark white, once a beacon of hope, now stood as a stark reminder of the choice that separated her from her family. They, fleeing for their lives, couldn't wait for her delayed farewell to her impractical treasure.

Reunited at last, the family, battered by fear and displacement, found solace in each other's presence. Yet, for the girl, the joy was tainted. The white shoes, now scuffed and dusty, remained a constant companion, not out of love, but out of a fear birthed from their initial loss.

Years turned into decades, but the memory of the separation remained etched in her soul. Even as the white faded, replaced by the worn leather of countless shoes, the fear of being lost again lingered. Each night, she would slip on footwear, a silent plea to the past, a desperate attempt to prevent the heartbreak from ever repeating.

The story of the white shoes is a poignant reminder of the complexities of human emotions and the lasting mark that trauma can leave. It's a tale of longing, sacrifice, and the bittersweet burden of memory.

On the night the Zionist gangs raided her village, she was lost from her family for several days because she was late in escaping with them to wear her new white shoes, which her heart broke with the desire to buy them. She dreamed of them

for many months, and fought intense and tearful wars to obtain it and force her mother to buy it for her, and it was a meager household budget.

She will not sacrifice those beloved white shoes, even if that means leaving behind her family, which fears destruction, murder, and loss of honor. She was the one who was stingy in wearing them on her feet so that they would not wear out. She found her family facing difficulty in the border camps after being consumed by fear, and her squeezing hands searched for them among the piles of meat thrown on the side of the road under the harsh sun of their ascension.

Forty years passed and she did not sleep without wearing her shoes, whether white or not, for fear of being lost from her family again, or being lost from her family because of a favorite shoe. The white shoes, once a symbol of desire and childhood whims, became a heavy burden woven into the fabric of her tragedy. The girl, caught between the yearning for a piece of innocent joy and the desperate need for safety, clung to her purchase, a decision that forever altered the course of her life.

## **The Employee**

She roams the field in her worn-out Palestinian dress, which alone survived the holocaust of the Zionist invasion that swept through the land of her village, snatching from them their lives, their dignity, the purity of their livelihood, and the affection of their community, and throwing them as refugees lost on the paths of the world. Now she works as a tomato picker in the field of this thin, emaciated man, with narrow joints, and a chest extending into the abdominal cavity, making his ribs dry out, and a disgrace to all who look at him, rotting. A corpse standing upright on two legs.

The sun beat down like a blacksmith's hammer, mercilessly forging sweat from her brow. Each sunrise brought a new day of drudgery, her body a tireless beast yoked to the burden of survival. Once a woman of land and wealth, forced asylum had stripped her bare, leaving only the desperate need to shield her family from the gnawing belly of hunger.

From dawn until dusk, she toiled in the fields of the very man who had stolen her life. Calloused hands, once adorned with rings of prosperity, now grasped rough tools, the price of a few measly coins to buy rice, water, and the faintest hope of life for her crippled husband, her frail mother-in-law, and the wide, hungry eyes of her children.

He, the "landowner," was a predator in the guise of a man, his desires as foul as the sweat that stained her once-luxurious

green silk dress. His eyes, devoid of any semblance of humanity, followed her every step, his words laced with the promise of food, shelter, but with a price that ripped at the very fabric of her being.

But she was not for sale. Not in the marketplace of desperation, not at the cost of her family's survival, nor at the expense of her very soul. Her spine, though bent under the weight of hardship, remained unbroken. Her voice, though hoarse from exhaustion, roared with defiance. Each curse hurled at him was a shield against the encroaching darkness, a testament to the unwavering flame of her dignity. Even if hunger gnawed at their bellies, even if the specter of death loomed large, she would not surrender. Her family huddled close, a fortress of love against the storm, their eyes reflecting her unwavering resolve. For in the face of despair, it was her dignity, her unyielding spirit, that remained their most precious possession, a beacon of hope in a world shrouded in darkness.

## **The Son of a Martyr**

In the heart of a bustling school, amidst the murmur of lessons and the thrum of youthful energy, walked a young man, his brilliance a beacon that cast long shadows. He was the son of a martyr, a title both revered and ostracized, a weight he carried with quiet dignity.

His name echoed through the halls, whispered with a mix of admiration and animosity. He topped the class, his mind a testament to perseverance, yet his path was paved with thorns. His classmates, consumed by a bitter envy, saw him as an outsider, an upstart who threatened their established order.

They taunted him with cruel whispers, painting him as a fugitive, a refugee, a beggar. Their words were laced with venom, each syllable a barbed arrow aimed at his heart. He endured their taunts in stoic silence, his resilience a silent rebuke to their cruelty. But their animosity festered, transforming into something darker. One day, as he exited the school gates, burdened by his worn satchel, they descended upon him like a pack of ravenous wolves. Fists rained down upon him, his only shirt, a symbol of his meager existence, ripped to shreds. Tears streamed down his face, a torrent of unshed emotions, a testament to the humiliation he felt.

Yet, amidst the storm, his voice rose, unwavering and defiant. "I am the son of a martyr," he declared, each word imbued with a quiet pride that echoed through the deserted street. His voice, though choked with emotion, held the unwavering strength of his lineage, a legacy woven into the very fabric of his being.

## Tent

Beneath furrowed brows, the grandmother wove tales of exile, her voice painting vivid pictures of lands lost and lives upended. Her granddaughters, captivated, listened intently, their young minds absorbing the echoes of a past they never knew. But one, the youngest, with an intelligence that pierced through the stories, posed the question that hung heavy in the air: "Why, Teta, do we always lose? Why are we forever wandering tents?"

The room fell silent, the weight of the question pressing down on the grandmother's heart. Fear, like a serpent, coiled within her. Was this innocent inquiry a premonition? A whisper of the future? In her mind, a chilling image flickered – another tent, another displacement, another chapter in the unending saga of exile.

A longing for peace, a yearning for a final resting place, washed over her. Not in the confines of a canvas shelter, but under the open sky, free from the chains of displacement. She closed her eyes, praying for the day the devil's whispers of another tent would cease, replaced by the gentle symphony of a life lived in peace, in their rightful home.

## **Flask**

Disconnected from her Palestinian heritage, the woman felt the European side of her lineage dominate. Yet, a powerful bond with her father, a man who dreamt of returning to his homeland in death, burned bright within her. His final wish became her mission. Her efforts to repatriate his body were met with frustration. Her mother, urging surrender to reality, suggested a European burial. But the woman wouldn't be swayed. Fueled by love and a desire to mend her father's broken dream of returning home, she made a heart-wrenching decision.

With a heavy heart, she cremated him, whispering apologies for the unorthodox method, but resolute in her purpose. The ashes, held in a simple bottle, became a precious vessel. Posing as a European tourist, she journeyed to Palestine, a secret fire burning within her. Seizing an opportune moment, she found solace in the act of burying the bottle. The Palestinian soil, cradling the ashes, became her father's final resting place. In that act, she brought him home, fulfilling his last wish and reconnecting him to the land he held dear.

## Dementia<sup>1</sup>

In a faraway land, an old man named Kayed Al-Saleh clung to a memory. He was older than a century, resided in a place he called Al-Alali, a mountainous paradise in his homeland of Palestine. It was there, high up in those breathtaking peaks, that Kayed had once been a rich and powerful man, respected by all.

But war had driven him and his family from their haven. Fleeing for their lives, they left behind Kayed's past - his pride, his status - everything buried deep within him. Now, an old man working as a hired laborer, a far cry from the master he once was, Kayed swallowed his humiliation each day.

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<sup>1</sup>- **Dementia** :is a general term for a decline in cognitive abilities that interferes with daily life. It's important to remember that dementia is not a normal part of aging, although it primarily affects older adults. There are many different causes of dementia, and the symptoms can vary depending on the underlying cause. However, some common symptoms of dementia include:Memory loss.Difficulty thinking and reasoning.Problems with language.Changes in personality and behavior.Difficulty with daily activities.

**The term "senile"** is considered outdated and offensive and should be avoided, especially in medical contexts. It was once used to describe the general decline in physical and mental abilities that some people experience as they age. However, this term is inaccurate and misleading because:

It implies that cognitive decline is an inevitable part of aging, which is not true. Many older adults remain mentally sharp and active well into their later years. It lumps together a variety of conditions, including dementia, under one umbrella term. This can make it difficult to accurately diagnose and treat specific conditions.

It is disrespectful to older adults and can perpetuate negative stereotypes about aging

Dementia, a cruel twist of fate, settled upon him during his struggle. For a month, he battled in his bed, surrounded by a multitude of descendants - sons, daughters, grandchildren, and their children. They never left his side, listening intently as he spoke of ghostly apparitions haunting his Al-Ali home, back in his beloved Palestine.

Ironically, his illness brought a strange joy to his family. They saw him laugh freely for the first time in years. He relived the forgotten chapters of his life, a life brimming with happiness and carefree days. He spoke of Sarah, his second wife, their love story unfolding anew. In his mind's eye, he saw the people of his village, both living and gone, greeting him with reverence, addressing him as "Sayyid Alali," the esteemed lord.

Finally, death arrived, its gentle touch closing Kayed Al-Saleh's eyes. In that moment, the old laborer transformed. He was no longer a displaced man, but a man returning home. He returned to Al-Alali, a young boy again, his heart brimming with the joy of his mountainous paradise, forever etched in his memory.

## Voice

Across vast distances, across the roar of oceans and the silent expanse of deserts, he journeyed. He carried the weight of generations, the forced exile of his grandfather and father etched into his soul. He had been raised on lies, his mind poisoned with the fallacy that words could overpower bullets, that truth could silence cannons. He spoke with unwavering conviction, his pen a relentless warrior against injustice. Yet, his voice echoed into a void, his pleas met with indifference. The world turned a deaf ear, its heart hardened to his people's plight.

Disillusioned, he cast aside the empty promises and obsolete doctrines peddled by outsiders. With his remaining resources, he acquired the tools of his new reality: weapons. In his homeland, these were the only voices that resonated, the only arguments that inflicted pain. Only through force could he pierce the veil of ignorance, the deafness that plagued his people.

## **The Lucky Boy**

A skeletal man, with hair the color of bleached wheat, reached out to the boy. The child, haunted by the brutal memories of his family's execution, flinched at the touch. The man, the supposed leader of the relief teams, stroked the boy's curls with a practiced smile, addressing a nearby journalist scribbling in a worn leather notebook.

"This fortunate young man," he declared, his voice dripping with false concern, "is one of the few to escape the recent tragedy. A true survivor, he witnessed the loss of his family in the blink of an eye."

The journalist, his brow furrowed, attempted to capture the man's words. However, his pen, as if revolted, refused to write the word "fortunate." Instead, it etched out a single, stark word: "afflicted." From that moment, the pen became a silent accusation, a tangible reminder of humanity's shameful silence in the face of such atrocities.

## **Waiting list**

The relentless sun beat down on a snaking line of desperate souls. Their aid cards, meant to be lifelines, felt like chains, anchoring them to a cycle of humiliation and hunger. Since dawn, they had endured the scorching heat, their once proud spirits now dulled by fatigue and the gnawing emptiness in their bellies.

A hulking figure, whip in hand, cracked it menacingly at the crowd. Its sting served as a grim reminder of their precarious existence. Women, eyes hollowed by worry, clutched their young closer. Men, their faces etched with despair, yearned only to secure a morsel for their starving families.

A young man, the embers of defiance still burning within him, witnessed the guard lash out at a frail woman. In that instant, the line blurred, the collective despair morphing into a surge of protective fury. He lunged forward, a force of nature against the oppressive figure. The whip clattered to the ground, replaced by the dull thud of fists against flesh. His raw cry echoed through the air, a desperate plea for humanity in the face of barbarity. "Why?!" he demanded, his voice hoarse with emotion. "We are people, not beasts! We don't crave your charity; we crave the right to die with dignity!" He expected a surge of support, a shared rebellion against their cruel reality. But the line remained unchanged, a silent testament to the depths of their despair. The young man's

defiance faltered, his shoulders slumping under the weight of their collective defeat.

Without a word, he returned to his place at the back of the line. Hunger gnawed at him, but it paled in comparison to the crushing weight of their collective powerlessness. He would wait, like the others, for his meager ration, a small and bitter token in the face of their stolen dignity.

## **Messages of Longing**

Every morning, the crackle of the old radio was a beacon of hope for the man. Kawthar Al-Nashashibi's voice, a lifeline across the airwaves, carried the "Messages of Longing" program - a poignant symphony of yearning and connection. He clutched the radio close, its worn casing a familiar comfort. His ears hungrily searched for a single name, a single flicker of recognition amidst the tide of longing. Jaber, his son, was the melody he desperately sought, the verse he clung to in the face of despair. He knew, in the quiet corners of his heart, that Jaber wouldn't answer. The news of his martyrdom, a sharp, searing knife, had been too much to bear. He shielded his wife, Latifa, from the truth, a shield built of love and the fragile hope that a message might bridge the chasm of loss. He, too, found solace in the charade. Each day, the radio became a ritual, a desperate prayer disguised as routine. The announcer's voice, a solemn yet hopeful echo, filled the silence with messages of love and separation. Only the final notes of Fayrouz's " signaled the program's end, a bittersweet reminder of a world that continued to spin.

He paid no heed to the whispers of pity that followed him. Their whispers were a distant echo compared to the deafening silence within. His mind, he acknowledged with quiet sorrow, had chosen its own sanctuary, a place where Jaber's voice still resonated, and hope, however fragile, still flickered.

## **Flight**

The world turned upside down without warning. blindfolded, barefoot, and swathed in striped pajamas, he was banished from the land he knew, cast out to a foreign shore beyond the Mediterranean. He learned a harsh truth: he was now a deportee, severed from his homeland. His heart ached for everything he'd left behind: his mother, his family, his wife, and the children whose young minds he'd nurtured as a teacher. One consuming desire burned within him: to return.

He attempted escape by sea, defying the unforgiving waves in a rickety boat. But fate intervened, his vessel succumbing to the ocean's wrath, leaving him clinging to life. Land routes proved equally treacherous; his attempts thwarted at every turn. Even burrowing through the earth offered no escape, tunnels collapsing like his hopes.

Only the vast sky remained, a canvas stretched across the horizon. He watched a free bird soar, its wings marking a path he yearned to follow. Could wings carry him to his one desire, lifting him above the weight of sorrow, longing, and disappointment that burdened him? Would they finally grant him passage back to his homeland, back to everything he held dear? The question echoed unanswered in the vastness above.

## **Trains**

Each one of them headed towards the train station, a grim intersection of journeys and goodbyes, echoed with the familiar murmur of Palestinians. Hailing from scattered corners of the world, these individuals shared a singular truth - none were truly home. They gathered, seeking solace in shared stories, each tale woven from the threads of a lost homeland.

As departure loomed, the metallic clang of the station resonated with a different tone. Each grasped their passport, a document that cemented their exile, a stark reminder of the citizenship acquired through displacement and loss. A silent pact was forged - to stifle the sobs of separation, to offer hesitant smiles. An illusion of indifference was donned, a promise whispered - to reunite, joyful and whole, in the land of their hearts, Palestine. Parting came with forced laughter, a façade masking the ache of separation, the biting chill of exile. Yet, beneath the veneer, their Palestinian spirit, vibrant in their local dialects, echoed through the sterile station, a testament to the resilience that even tears could not fully conceal.

Their paths diverged, each passenger bound for an unknown destination, carrying the weight of their shared history, and the unwavering hope of one day returning, truly home, to the land that resonated in their souls - Palestine.

With downcast eyes, they filed towards the train, each destined for a distant unknown. None dared a backward glance, for fear their hidden tears and the sting of defeat might be revealed.

## Lunch

The relentless sun beat down on the valley as the young girl and her brother trudged towards the heart of Karama camp. Hunger gnawed at their bellies, but a glimmer of hope fueled their steps – the **UNRWA**<sup>1</sup> restaurant, their daily lifeline.

Their father had secured two restaurant user cards for them, ensuring at least one full meal each. Their mother, however, was left behind, her empty stomach a constant ache. Each day, the girl concealed a plastic bag beneath her clothes, determined to share her meager portion with her mother.

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<sup>1</sup>- **The United Nations** Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a United Nations agency that supports the relief and human development of Palestinian refugees. It was established in 1949 by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) following the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and began its operations in May 1950. UNRWA is the only UN agency dedicated to assisting refugees from a specific region or conflict. The agency's mission is to provide assistance and protection to some 5.7 million registered Palestine refugees who are residing in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. UNRWA's services encompass education, healthcare, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in situations of armed conflict. UNRWA faces a number of challenges, including the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the rising needs of the refugee population, and a chronic shortage of funding. However, the agency remains a vital lifeline for Palestinian refugees, providing them with essential services and advocating for their rights.

This day, however, fate dealt a cruel blow. As she clutched their meals, the bag slipped from her grasp, sending the food tumbling onto the dusty ground. Half the precious orange rolled away, disappearing into the grime. Tears welled up in her eyes as she pleaded with the restaurant official for a replacement, but her pleas were met with a stern refusal and a harsh reprimand.

She left, a heavy weight settling in her chest. The thought of her mother, waiting at the gate with an empty stomach, was a relentless torment. Her brother's innocent eyes, filled with confusion and worry, added to the unbearable burden.

Their walk back was shrouded in a deafening silence, broken only by the relentless heat. The girl carried the weight of the wasted food and the looming hunger at home, a burden far heavier than the scorching sun.

## **Difficult birth**

A hush fell over the delivery room. The air crackled with a tension that transcended the sterile white walls. Despite the familiar symphony of beeps and whirring machines, this birth was different. The woman on the bed, her face etched with a tapestry of wrinkles that spoke of a life well-lived, exhaled ragged breaths. Sweat beaded on her brow, a stark contrast to the silver strands framing it.

Her fourteenth delivery, and the years seemed to weigh down on her like a physical burden. Each contraction seemed to pull at an already weary thread. Yet, there was a quiet resilience in her eyes, a flicker of defiance against the whispers of her age.

A young nurse, barely past her twenties, approached the bed. Her voice, though professional, held a tinge of impatience. "Please try to be quiet," she said, her gaze briefly landing on the woman's worn Palestinian dress, a silent testament to the journey she'd undertaken. "Your cries are disturbing the other patients."

The woman's lips thinned into a resolute line. This birth, unlike the thirteen that came before, wasn't just about bringing life into the world. It was a testament to the enduring spirit that burned within her, a refusal to be silenced, even in the face of pain and fatigue.

Instead of succumbing to the pressure to quiet down, she met the nurse's gaze with a steely glint in her own. "These are the sounds of life, child," she rasped, her voice unwavering. "They may be disturbing, but they are necessary. They are the cries of a mother welcoming her child, a woman fighting for her creation."

The room held its breath. The young nurse, caught off guard by the woman's quiet strength, faltered for a moment. In that shared moment, a silent understanding bloomed. The sterile, clinical atmosphere seemed to soften, replaced by a profound reverence for the raw power of life unfolding before them.

## **Death**

The old woman, his paternal grandmother, was a symphony of discontent. Food held no flavor, drinks tasted of dust, even the air seemed to mock her with its foreign tang. Clothes, companionship, all were irritants in this land of exile. Loss, a constant ache in her bones, intertwined with the sharp sting of loneliness and the gnawing terror of a life uprooted.

Yet, within her, burned an ember of defiance – Palestine. Everything, she'd declare, with a sigh that rattled the very windows, everything was more beautiful there. It wasn't about comfort, this refrain. It spoke of a deeper truth, a yearning for the soil that cradled her soul, the language that whispered through her dreams.

When illness gripped her, a fierce vow escaped her lips. A promise, a plea, to her children, grandchildren, a lineage bound by longing. Carry her back, she rasped, let her die in the embrace of her homeland. Death, she believed, held a different melody in Palestine, a song of solace, a final homecoming.

And in the quiet surrender to her mortality, a final wish – to be buried in the earth that knew her laughter, her tears, her very essence. Palestine, a land more compassionate, she'd murmur, a land that held its people close, even in the stillness of death. This final act, a testament to the profound connection, an unspoken truth – that some part of us, forever, belongs to the place we call home.

## Necklace

All she has from her homeland is this metal pendant in the shape of a map of Palestine Tucked against her skin, hidden beneath the worn collar of her jacket, she kept a fragment of her homeland. A metal pendant, shaped like a map, hung from a simple hemp string, a silent reminder of all she'd left behind. Carefully, she eased it out, ensuring it wouldn't be swallowed by the depths of her coat, a secret held close to her heart, shielded from judging eyes.

New to this American town nestled in a remote state, she and her family had joined the tapestry of immigrants. This quaint primary school, nestled amidst a verdant forest, was her New Haven. The teacher, with gentle gestures, placed her beside a curious blonde girl. The girl's gaze snagged on the necklace, its aged brass glinting with an alluring emerald and black patina. Reaching out, she touched it, her voice laced with childlike wonder. "Can I see it?" she asked.

But the reply, though delivered in a voice barely above a whisper, held the weight of a thousand unspoken stories. "It's my home," she said, her words firm, her grip tightening around the pendant. "And I won't give it away." I will not give Palestine to anyone.

## Airport

The fluorescent lights of the airport waiting room cast a sterile glow on the mismatched assembly of travelers. A figure draped in black, a cloak matching the shadows in his heart, fidgeted in his seat. He nervously ran a hand through hair reeking of damp basement, desperately trying to disappear behind a book clearly not his own.

Across the worn leather bench, his neighbor observed the pantomime with practiced ease. The man's every detail – the ill-fitting clothes, the greasy hair, the nervous ticks and mumbles resembling a frantic woodpecker – screamed "thief" louder than any alarm. The pungent aroma of cheap slippers added the final touch to the portrait.

What truly surprised the observer, however, was the man's complete miscalculation. Here, in this sterile purgatory, the thief's attempt to blend in was as transparent as the flimsy paperback shield. In a clumsy attempt at conversation, the man leaned over, his voice dripping with a poorly concealed fake English accent.

"Heading back home," he muttered, eyes darting around. "Where are you off to?"

The reply, delivered in a language as refined as the man's disguise was lacking, was laced with a chilling disdain. "Poland."

A flicker of surprise crossed the man's face, quickly masked by a poorly crafted smile. "Your homeland, eh?" he inquired, the insincerity dripping from his voice.

The response came swift and sharp, cutting through the feigned camaraderie. "It is your homeland," the man spat, his voice laced with a deep-seated anger. "Mine is Palestine."

The air crackled with unspoken tension as the words hung heavy in the sterile air. In that moment, the thief's charade lay shattered, exposed by the quiet dignity of a stranger in a land far from home.

## A coin - a penny<sup>1</sup>

In the worn canvas of his pocket, a relic nestled – a Palestinian penny, pocked with age and revolution. It was a gift from his uncle, a martyr in the 1936 struggle against the British. A meagre offering, perhaps, but it held the weight of his homeland, a tangible piece amidst the loss. His family, his home, his friends – all stolen by the winds of war. He'd lost even the book he poured over, the worn Quran his uncle brought back from Hajj, a sacred link to his roots. Stripped bare, his mind, too, became a battlefield, haunted by ghosts of the past.

One day, a discarded scrap of red wool caught his eye, a defiant echo against the grey. With practiced fingers, he tied it to the coin, transforming it into a talisman. No longer a forgotten penny, it became a beacon, a reminder of the world he carried within. He wandered, chasing phantoms of a lost past in waking dreams. Whenever pitying eyes offered solace, foreign coins held out in tentative hands, he clenched his fist, refusing the gesture. "I want a Palestinian penny,"

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<sup>1</sup>- **a penny:** The most common meaning of penny is a one-cent coin, or 1/100th of a US dollar. The US penny is featuring Abraham Lincoln on the obverse (heads) side and a shield representing Lincoln's preservation of the United States on the reverse (tails) side. Penny can also refer to the British penny, a unit of currency that was part of the British pound sterling system before decimalization. The British penny was replaced by the new pence in 1971. Penny is also the informal name for the cent unit of account in Canada, although one-cent coins were removed from circulation, some contexts, "penny" can be used informally to refer to any small amount of money.

he'd declare, his voice hoarse but his resolve unwavering. For in that worn coin, he held the fragment of a home, a memory worth more than any charity. The price of the diaspora, a single coin carrying the weight of his world.

## Al-Baqja <sup>1</sup>

She was the one who sent him this bundle with her younger brother. He must have risked himself to deliver it to him before the ship took off and carried him and his companions away from Lebanon so that they would be further away from Palestine.

The worn fabric of the bundle felt rough against his calloused palms, the weight of it heavy in his hands. It was the last piece of her, a tangible memory wrapped in worn cloth. He knew, without looking, what it contained – another collection of hand-me-downs, clothes that wouldn't fit, wouldn't be new. These bundles had filled his childhood, a constant reminder of displacement, of longing for something more. He

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<sup>1</sup>- **Al-Baqja:** is a traditional Palestinian bundle made of fabric, typically cotton or burlap, used to carry clothes, food, or other items. It is rectangular in shape and is tied with a rope or string. The baqjah has been used in Palestine for centuries. It was a common sight in the past, especially in rural areas, and was used for a variety of purposes, such as: Carrying clothes when traveling or moving from one place to another. Carrying food or household items. Presenting gifts. Storing valuables. Types of baqjah: Small baqjah: Used to carry small items, such as underwear or socks. Large baqjah: Used to carry large items, such as outerwear or blankets. Decorated baqjah: Used for presenting gifts or storing valuables. The baqjah is a symbol of Palestinian heritage. It has been used for centuries in various aspects of Palestinian life. The baqjah is used in many Palestinian proverbs and sayings, such as "The baqjah cannot carry everything. «The baqjah is also used in many Palestinian songs and poems, such as the song "Baqjah ya baqjah.

remembered tears on holiday mornings, the sting of wearing clothes that screamed of charity, not love.

Yet, this bundle was different. This one held the scent of Rabab, the one he loved, the one left behind. He lifted it to his nose, inhaling deeply, seeking solace in the familiar warmth of her lavender soap. Tears pricked his eyes, but he blinked them back, unwilling to betray the grief etched on the faces around him. His companions, too, were consumed by the weight of goodbyes, the uncertainty of their journey, and the vast, unknown horizon that stretched before them. He would hold onto this bundle, a final embrace from Rabab, a promise to carry her memory even as he sailed away. It was a burden, yes, but also a connection, a silent vow not to let the distance sever the love that bound them.

# ***Arabs Melodies***



## **The Monster**

Soldiers, his parents had warned, were creatures beyond humanity. Their hearts, forged in the fires of war, were impervious to empathy, twisted into instruments of violence capable of unthinkable acts. He'd never seen one, born amidst the dusty confines of a refugee camp far from his ancestral home. Yet, these monsters, as his parents called them, existed for him only in whispered stories and the haunted expressions worn by the elders. The Zionist soldier should not be a human being, but rather a broken beast, so that his heart is strong enough to kill innocent people, displace them, and steal their Palestine. He had never seen a Zionist soldier in his life. He was born in **the Karama camp**<sup>1</sup> outside his homeland, but he knows from his parents that the Zionist monsters are camping there west of the river.

One day, the world of his imagination collided with harsh reality. Pursuers, relentless and brutal, chased his family to a fortified camp, a chilling tableau of steel giants and weaponized monstrosities designed to dismantle any opposing force. The pursuing monsters followed them to the Karama camp, fortified with giant tanks and destructive

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<sup>1</sup>- Al Karama Camp: It is a Palestinian refugee camp, in the Jordan Valley region in Jordan. Camp conditions are often difficult, with residents facing overcrowding, poverty and unemployment.

vehicles, to eliminate the militants. They were soon severely defeated by their pursuers and captured. He and the curious camp children who surrounded the barreled Zionist tanks were allowed to look at the monsters trapped in them. The fight was swift and unforgiving, ending in the utter defeat of the camp's defenders.

Captured and subdued, the "monsters" were displayed like trophies within their metal cages, their faces obscured by shadows cast by the unforgiving sun. A throng of curious children, including himself, gathered around the barreled tanks, peering into the unknown with a mix of fear and morbid fascination. He was the first to look out the tank's hatch to catch a glimpse of who was lying inside. He saw a Zionist soldier bound and shackled to the bottom of the tank, unable to move. The victorious heroes told him that the Zionist enemy sent its soldiers to the War of Dignity in shackles, to ensure that they would not flee the battlefield because of their extreme cowardice.

They were surprised that the Zionist soldier was a human being and not a monster as he thought. The victorious hero smiled and said to him: No, he is not a monster, he is just a cowardly dog tied in chains.

He looked at the defeated figures, searching for the monstrous visage his parents described, but all he saw were weary, defeated men, their humanity stripped bare by the relentless machinery of war.

## **Reinforcement**

They decided to support the Palestinian cause in a strong way that would enhance its strength. They established an international Arab Islamic organization for this purpose. They collected huge sums of money for it, distributed honorary and administrative positions according to the financial sums provided by their countries and institutions, and promised the masses yearning for Arab freedom and dignity that they would have supportive measures.

The well-meaning do-gooders, flush with cash and brimming with self-importance, established a global body to champion the cause. They showered it with donations, creating a hierarchy based on financial contributions. To the desperate masses yearning for freedom, they offered hollow promises of support. Briefly, they ignited hope for profound change with a dramatic, anticipated decision: renting an island resort for "strategic deliberations." While the world held its breath, these self-proclaimed saviors withdrew to a life of luxury, funded by the very donations intended for the oppressed. They pledged to brainstorm solutions while indulging in a lavish retreat of women, wine, and pleasure. Their "strategic thinking" stretched on indefinitely, leaving the Palestinians trapped in an agonizing limbo, waiting for a solution that never came.

## **Blood**

There are Arabs fighting on the face of the earth under Palestinian names. He does not care about this war. He closes the basement door and isolates himself there, away from the terrible bloodbath. He knows that the conspiracy to kill the Palestinians is part of the collusion to exterminate them and establish a greater state for the Zionist entity.

He does not want to be involved in this farce, so he ignores this conspiracy. He flees from his team, who does not understand why he is fighting, and takes his Palestinian friend by the hand, and they isolate themselves in the basement. There they remember their childhood days, browse pictures of fun and innocence, and leave the outside world fighting on the roads of hell. By the flickering candlelight, they delved into memories, each picture a portal to a time before the bloodbath. Faces, once etched with the anxieties of youth, now beamed with the carefree joy of childhood. Their laughter, a defiant echo in the tomb-like silence, dared to challenge the symphony of violence outside.

The world above might be consumed by flames, but in the quiet haven below, two souls held onto the embers of their humanity, a testament to the enduring power of shared memories and the desperate yearning for peace in the face of war.

## A New Curriculum

The sting of her father's scolding echoed in her ears, a familiar refrain for her and her brothers. Perfect grades or face his wrath, that was the unwavering expectation. The UNRWA school, their saving grace with its free education for Palestinian refugees, felt like a battleground under this constant pressure. Her father's words, though harsh, held a truth she couldn't deny: "Knowledge is our only treasure. Fight ignorance!" Even if it meant selling their clothes, their education was paramount.

News of a new curriculum sent a wave of excitement through their class. No more brittle pages inherited from countless students before them! The promise of crisp, unused books was a shared dream, a whisper of hope amidst their worn-down reality. The day the books arrived, she eagerly flipped through her new history and geography texts. The scent of fresh paper filled her senses, a small victory in itself. But as she searched the geography book for a map of Palestine, a cold dread settled in. Her heart hammered against her ribs as she scoured the history pages, the name of her homeland absent from the list of neighboring countries.

With a heavy thud, she closed the books, the crispness a mockery now. The threat of zeros in these subjects no longer held its terror. Geography and history, they felt like a betrayal, a deliberate erasure. The weight of their absence was far heavier than any scolding or bad grade. The new books, symbols of hope, now felt like hollow cages, their pages filled with a truth that refused to acknowledge her own existence.

## **Zionists**

Since she was young, her family taught her that the Zionist Jews were the ones who usurped her homeland, Palestine, and expelled her and her people from it. She grew up with Palestine hanging in her chest for love, and a metal map around her neck that will never leave her.

This Arab soldier was the first to cut her Palestinian necklace during a protest march against the continued Zionist occupation of Palestine. He threw her to the ground, stepped on her with his thick military boots, and told her: The Zionists are better than you. What brings you to us?

Her childhood tears, once triggered by an unknown cause, now seemed like a mere raindrop compared to the tempestuous downpour that engulfed her life. The eviction from their home, a haven for two decades, ripped open a wound far deeper than any childhood disappointment. It was a cruel reminder of their ongoing plight as Palestinians – displaced, persecuted, and constantly vulnerable.

The greed of the landlord, fueled by the chaos of their adopted Arab country, mirrored the injustices that had plagued their family for generations. Their grandmother's words, "bearers of sadness and abuse," echoed with a haunting truth, as they were stripped not just of their roof but also their possessions and dignity.

Standing naked, barefoot, and empty-handed, they were once again refugees in their own land. Their cries, like the countless others before them, went unheard, swallowed by the indifference of a world seemingly accustomed to their pain. Yet, amidst the despair, flickered a faint ember of resilience. They had faced hardship before, and they would face it again, clinging to the hope that one day, the storm would finally subside.

## **Honor**

In a sun-baked camp, where hope clung to tattered tents like dust devils, the young teacher, eyes filled with hopeful naivety, scrawled upon the cracked board: "The Arab is respected. He is not treated unfairly and does not accept being insulted."

Her words, stark against the parched earth, echoed in the silence of the classroom. Women, their faces etched with stories older than time, turned, their gazes a tapestry of lived experiences. A murmur, like the whisper of desert wind, danced through the air. Then, laughter erupted, a sudden downpour in a barren land. It wasn't the cruel laughter of mockery, but the bittersweet chuckle of truth unveiled. The teacher, startled, blinked, a question trembling on her lips. Umm Mahmoud, her weathered hands calloused yet strong, spoke, her voice a deep well of memory. "Those words, child, they shimmered like mirages in the distance, once. But look around you, at the sand beneath our feet, the tears that stain our shawls. Where is the respect, the fairness, the honor you speak of?" Another woman, eyes glinting with defiance, chimed in, her voice laced with desert thorns. "The only honorable Arabs exist on that board, frozen in an idealized frame. Our reality, child, is painted in the cracks of those very words, a stark reminder of the chasm between what is said and what is lived."

The silence that followed was heavy, pregnant with unspoken realities. The teacher, her naivety slowly giving way to understanding, stared at the stark sentence on the board. The words, once bold, now seemed pale against the backdrop of the women's lived experiences.

## Arabism

He reveled in the flash of cameras, a practiced smile plastered across his face. Newspapers fawned over his philanthropy; his name synonymous with generosity. Lavish gifts flowed from his coffers to strangers in distress, endangered creatures, and crumbling monuments across the globe. "Arabian Robin Hood," they called him, a title he cherished.

Silk, silver, and gold adorned him like a gaudy Christmas tree. Bespoke suits draped his portly frame, his feet encased in rare leathers and furs. Money flowed freely; his face plastered across international dailies chronicling his charitable deeds. He couldn't read a word of their praise, his ignorance of languages mirroring his illiteracy in his own tongue.

The plight of the Palestinians, he claimed in a televised interview, seared his fat-encased heart. He wept theatrically, milking the cameras for every drop of sympathy. A pilgrimage to Mecca was declared, a grand show of piety orchestrated for the media's hungry eyes. At the holiest site, he beseeched God to aid the Palestinians, his voice cracking with manufactured emotion. Cameras captured his every move, his "support" immortalized in pixels.

But beneath the gilded exterior lurked a hollowness. His "charity" was a carefully crafted performance, a shield deflecting scrutiny from his dubious business dealings. His

tears were crocodile tears, his prayers devoid of genuine empathy. He cared little for the Palestinians' suffering, his concern solely for the applause it brought.

The true heroes, he conveniently ignored, were the ordinary people who toiled silently, offering genuine help without fanfare. Their sacrifices were invisible, their names unsung. Yet, it was their quiet acts of compassion that truly made a difference, not the empty gestures of a gilded philanthropist.

## **Soldier**

His mother kissed him and told him, according to the testimony of his family and relatives: Be careful not to return to your home before you liberate Palestine. I won't be satisfied with you if you don't.

He enlisted in this army two years ago, but this liberation is his sacred mission. He feels very proud that he is part of a large Arab army that came to participate in the liberation of Palestine from the Zionist gangs that seized a large part of it.

The war began with a group of Zionists. They could wipe them all out at sunset if they worked hard. But the order to withdraw comes from their leadership there in the Arab capital. They were amazed at this matter that came at the height of their victory. The army sheltering them withdraws completely, but he refuses to withdraw and sets out alone, facing the army's path, with bowed foreheads, broken eyes, and failed rifles, and he decides to fight the Zionist gangs alone. His mother's kiss remained on his cheek, and a salty tear mixed with the farewell. She murmured; her voice heavy with unspoken fears: "Do not return until you have breathed the words of freedom. My heart aches for peace, and my heart for glory, but both intertwined are our victory."

Two years had hardened him, but her words remained his sacred oath. And now, amid the liberating roar of their Arab

host, he saw his mission. The enemy, a snake coiling around their land, will be crushed before sunset.

Then silence. He commanded from afar, the winds of retreat chilling. Faces fell, and the army turned its tail, leaving it standing tall amid the echoes of its vow. He could not, and would not, abandon his goal.

Alone, he faced the retreating defenders, their desperation a stark contrast to his blazing determination. He turned towards the enemy, their laughter echoing in the distance. His steps were steady, and his heart was on fire, a lone warrior against the gathering storm.

## **Demonstrations**

pleas drowned in the ocean's roar, echoed only by the few who chose defiance. Cheap lives bled to defend, a futile stand against the crashing waves. Across the sea, exile beckoned, stealing from their land, their loved ones, their hopes, leaving dreams and comrades' graves behind. The Palestinian camp - Sabra and Shatila - is slaughtered from vein to vein at the hands of Arab criminals and Zionists. The camp called for help from its fellow fighters, but no one responded except for a few of them who remained after everyone left. They sacrificed their cheap lives in order to defend it. The rest of the Palestinian guerrillas are being robbed by the raging sea towards their new exile, far from their families, their memories, their dreams, and the graves of their companions on the path of resistance.

As for the Arabs, they were all playing one of their decisive historical roles, as they were following the world football qualifiers with all sincerity and interest, counting the goals, and preferring the loser or the winner according to their whims.

In the morning, the Sabra and Shatila camp was a river of Palestinian blood, But the "brave" Arabs, once stirred by passion, had returned to their slumber. Millions roared for goals, not the fallen, deaf to the camp's silent grief. In a world

deaf to their tragedy, Sabra and Shatila slept, its pain forever etched in stillness. And the brave Arabs rose up in every inch of the Arab world with one bold, angry impulse in million-man demonstrations in support of an Arab football team that had lost, and another that had won, and they did not remember the dead in the miserable camp.

## Orphan

The woman, consumed by a relentless hunger for riches, felt a hollowness that money couldn't fill. Motherhood, a natural extension for many, held no sway over her. Yet, the idea of an heir, a blood tie to secure her vast fortune, became a twisted obsession. Her husband's relatives, vultures circling a future inheritance, were an unwelcome thought. She is barren, does not respond to her obsession with becoming the richest woman, and does not play the role of a caring mother.

She wants a child to adopt, so she burns his entire past and attributes him to herself and her husband so that he will be an heir to his wealth, so all the money goes to her instead of going to her husband's relatives after his death. Enter the child, a blank slate upon which she could etch a fabricated past. Through a web of manipulation, perhaps even coercion, she brought him into their opulent world. Photos were staged, stories woven, a web of deceit spun to paint him as their own. The child, innocent to the machinations around him, became a pawn in her elaborate game.

This wasn't about nurturing a young life, filling it with love and warmth. It was a cold, calculated move to ensure her wealth remained firmly within her grasp. Her husband, perhaps a kind man blinded by his love for her, might become an unwitting accomplice in this charade. The child, a stranger thrust into a loveless performance, would grow up under the

gilded cage of her obsession. She found what she wanted in the orphans of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, whose families died and left them orphans without mercy or pity. She easily got a cute baby from them without any conditions for adoption. She chose him as she wanted: blond, with flowing hair, golden skin, and green eyes. She kidnapped him away from his two sisters. She refused to adopt them with him, as she needed a male child to inherit her husband's wealth, and she was not looking for wages, charity, or motherhood.

She took him to her house while he cried over the loss of his two sisters. She announced that he was her son, changed his name, and prevented him from remembering the camp, its family, and his two sisters. After a short time, he forgot that he was Palestinian, and got lost in the crowd thanks to the kind Arab woman who adopted him and separated him from his origin.



# ***Enemy Melodies***



## **A thief's wife**

Since she started observing that Palestinian who lives in a tin shack on her land, she has been seeing the world from another angle. The Zionist entity's administration deprived the family of that Palestinian woman of this land after confiscating it from them, but they were determined to remain in a small tin hut on their land.

Before she lived next to this Palestinian woman, she thought she was a happy wife living with a perfect husband in the Promised Land, but when she saw the life of this Palestinian woman, she discovered that they were just thieves who stole the land from her, and that she was nothing more than a deceived wife living with an arrogant soldier. He raped Palestinian female prisoners in prisons. He leaves her as a servant locked in the house

She sympathizes with that Palestinian. This land is their legal right. She asks her husband to return the land they stole to its Palestinian owner, resign from his job, and return to France to live there in their country of origin. But he refuses to do so and confronts her with a storm of anger after he beats her.

She decided to carry out her wish despite his refusal. She prepares mushrooms, which he loves. She carefully selects them from the poisonous kind. She cooks it for him and serves it to him in the evening for dinner as an apology for what she did to him in the morning .

The scent of simmering broth, earthy and rich, filled the air. But beneath it lurked a sinister undercurrent, a bitter counterpoint to the illusion of a cozy domestic scene. Outside, the sun dipped below the horizon, casting long shadows across the disputed land. Inside, the wife, her face etched with a desperate resolve, watched her husband devour the meal she had so painstakingly prepared.

This was not a love offering, nor a simple supper. Each spoonful was a silent accusation, a venomous whisper of the truth she had unearthed. The truth that shattered the gilded cage of her existence, revealing the rot beneath the surface of her "perfect" life. It was a bitter truth she had gleaned from the resolute woman who lived in a tin shack on the edge of their stolen property - a stark reminder of the injustice that had birthed their comfortable life.

The man, oblivious to the storm brewing within his wife, savored the meal. Little did he know, he was consuming more than just the carefully selected mushrooms; he was ingesting the bitter fruit of his actions. The land they lived on, the life they led, all built on a foundation of stolen dreams and shattered lives. The wife, steeled by conviction and a sense of grim justice, sat across from him, a mirror reflecting his ignorance. Every bite he took was a step closer to the inevitable reckoning. This was not a meal; it was a pact with fate, a shared descent into the darkness they had both, in their own ways, created.

Here, under the watchful gaze of the setting sun, their twisted family dinner unfolded, a silent symphony of guilt, betrayal, and a desperate yearning for redemption – a yearning that might very well lead them both down the same path of oblivion, leaving behind only the lingering scent of a poisoned meal and the ghosts of lives forever fractured.

## Silence

The battle raged against a backdrop of scorching sun and swirling sand. Fear pulsed through his veins, a rhythm keeping pace with the relentless drumming of gunfire. He witnessed the fragility of life, comrades falling around him like marionettes with their strings cut. The enemy, unseen in the haze, felt less like men and more like ethereal reapers, harvesting souls with chilling efficiency.

This was a terrible defeat for them against the Palestinian guerrillas. He and his fellow recruits experienced the meaning of fear, death, and defeat. They were everywhere, not people, but ghosts that chased them, killed them, and destroyed their relics. Only he and some wounded soldiers survived this trap.

He was one of the fortunate few to crawl out of that infernal landscape, his body bearing the scars of the battle etched in blood and bone. Recovery was a slow, agonizing process, a month spent grappling with the ghosts of the fallen and the hollowness of survival.

His return unfolded in a charade of jubilant pronouncements, a celebration of fictitious victory. They bombarded him with fabricated stories, expecting him to parrot their manufactured narrative. But the truth, heavy and suffocating, wouldn't be silenced. He refused to become another cog in their machinery of lies.

He spent a month in psychological treatment until the Zionist army administration allowed his family to meet him after they taught him many lies about a sweeping victory that only occurred in the imagination of the liars, who forced him to repeat their chatter and nonsense so that the Zionists would not know that they had been defeated to the core.

So, he chose silence. A wall of quiet defiance, a stark contrast to the cacophony of fabricated triumph. His voice became a silent scream, a testament to the horrors witnessed and the truth they sought to bury. It was a choice, a heavy burden, but one he bore with the stoic resolve of a man haunted by echoes of war.

## Arabic Song

She listens in complete confidentiality to Arabic songs in the Egyptian dialect. She is forbidden from showing sympathy and love for anything Arabic, even if it is a song.

They called her **Mizrahi**<sup>1</sup>, a label that felt like a cage, separating her from both sides. The promise of a "Promised Land" had lured her across the sea, a mirage that shimmered with hope but dissolved upon arrival. Here, she was an outsider, judged not for her faith, but for the land she left behind. She came here with a trick called the Promised Land, and when she fell into its net, she realized that the Zionist Black Widow would eat her because she is a Mizrahi Jew, as they call her.

There are many Eastern Jews like her who came to this land deceived, fleeing behind a great illusion. She is not an Eastern Jew, but rather a deceived Jew who left her family in

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<sup>1</sup>- **Mizrahi:** refers to Jews of Middle Eastern and North African descent. It is a broad term encompassing diverse communities with unique histories and traditions, including:

Mashriqi Jews: These communities originated in the Middle East, such as Yemenite Jews, Iraqi Jews, and Persian Jews. Maghrebi Jews: These communities hail from North Africa, including Moroccan Jews, Algerian Jews, and Tunisian Jews. The term "Mizrahi" is relatively recent, emerging in the 20th century. While its usage allows for identifying a shared geographical origin, it's crucial to remember the vast diversity within the Mizrahi community. Each subgroup possesses its own distinct cultural heritage, religious practices, and dialects. It's important to avoid generalizations or stereotypes when referring to Mizrahi Jews. Their experiences vary greatly, and their individual stories deserve to be acknowledged and understood.

Egypt, just as others left their families in Morocco, Yemen, and Iraq, and came to burn them all in this place.

There, where she came from, they did not criticize her as a Jew, but here in this Zionist settlement she is criticized, with or without reason, because she is an Easterner coming from Egypt and gets the lowest benefits, while the Western Jew gets all the privileges.

Now, she was confined to a "metal box" atop a desolate mountain, far from the sand-kissed shores of her childhood. She cannot express her anger at her deception and her remorse because she left the shore of Alexandria, where there was love, neighbors and sweet company, and came stored until death in a metal box in an isolated village at the top of the mountains.

Every day, she takes revenge on those who brought her here by secretly listening to Egyptian Arabic songs and singing their Arabic lyrics with love and joy, and she clings and dreams of her feet sinking into the sand of the Alexandria beach, away from this cursed colony.

But even in this isolation, she refused to be silenced. Every stolen moment spent listening to the songs of her homeland was an act of defiance, a silent rebellion against the forces that sought to erase her roots. The music, whispered secrets of a life left behind, fueled her dreams of returning, of sinking her feet back into the familiar embrace of the Alexandrian

sand. Back in Alexandria, amidst the bustling streets and familiar warmth, her heritage was embraced, not ostracized

The woman, a shadow in the harsh desert sun, clutched the worn earpiece to her ear. The music, a forbidden melody in the harsh winds of her new life, flowed through her, a language of her past, a connection to her stolen identity.

## **The whip**

The man lived in a perpetual cycle of inflicting and receiving pain. Deep down, a flicker of self-awareness flickered in the darkness, a voice that whispered "degenerate" during his drunken stupor and haunted him in sober whispers. Deep down, he realizes how devoid of morals, values, and nobility he is, and he lovingly calls himself "degenerate" during his drunken hours, but when he wakes up, he whispers this title to himself without stopping.

He was a product of rigidity, raised by a strict religious school that molded him into a creature devoid of compassion, the very antithesis of the faith he supposedly served. He carried the weight of his crimes, a chilling testament to the system that birthed him. He is an illegitimate son, according to the testimony of everyone who knew him. He does not know his father or mother specifically and definitively. But it was that strict Zionist religious school in Jerusalem that nurtured and raised him until he emerged according to what it wanted and desired, devoid of morals, values, and humanity. He carries out all the crimes entrusted to him with cold nerves and a dead conscience, and during work hours he practices his disgusting profession as a member of **Nahshon's forces**, which specializes in torturing Palestinian prisoners in detention centers, interrogation centers, and execution chambers.

His job was a grotesque reflection of his inner turmoil. He moved through his days with a chilling detachment, wielding his whip like a conductor's baton, orchestrating symphonies of suffering within the confines of detention centers and execution chambers. The screams echoed in his hollow heart, but brought no remorse, only a chilling sense of satisfaction. He likes to begin his torture sessions by beating the Palestinian prisoner with a whip until his back, face, stomach, and thighs bleed, then pounces on him, taking advantage of the handcuffs on his hands and feet to extract his flesh with his fox jaw.

But the true torture began when his official leave arrived. The shackles that once held his victims now held him captive. The whip, once an instrument of his cruelty, became the weapon against him. The world mirrored his actions back at him, returning his cruelty tenfold. During his official leave, he suffers from being shackled a lot, from having his feet and hands tied by night girls, and from being beaten with the same whip that he used to beat his victims in prison, until his voice fades as he screams and asks for help without an answer.

He won't sleep until she spit in his face and call him a "bastard." Then he rests and sleeps because he gets the contempt and torment he deserves.

He found no solace in sleep until someone, anyone, would acknowledge the monster he had become. A single word,

"bastard," spat with contempt, would pierce his self-constructed shell, allowing him a semblance of peace. It was a twisted penance, a desperate craving for the very thing he denied his victims - recognition, even if it came wrapped in hatred.

## Dress

In order to devote her career as a retired model and owner of the largest fashion house in London, **the Zionist Mossad**<sup>1</sup> paid her huge sums of money to promote the image of Zionist women. She is wearing **Palestinian clothes**<sup>2</sup>. Its

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<sup>1</sup>- **The Mossad:** officially known as the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, is the national intelligence agency of Israel. It is one of the three main Israeli intelligence agencies, along with Aman (military intelligence) and Shin Bet (internal security).

Here's a summary of the Mossad:

Function: Responsible for intelligence collection, covert operations, and counter-terrorism.

Established: 1949

Headquarters: Tel Aviv, Israel

Reports to: Prime Minister of Israel

The Mossad is known for its secrecy and has been involved in a number of high-profile operations throughout its history. It is important to note that due to the nature of its work, much of the Mossad's activities remain classified.

<sup>2</sup> - **Palestinian women's clothing** combines practicality with cultural and regional influences. Like many other cultures in the Middle East, Palestinian clothing emphasizes loose-fitting garments that provide comfort in the warm climate. **Traditional Palestinian attire** for women is often centered around the **thobe**, a long, loose dress. Thobes come in a variety of styles, materials, and colors, and are often adorned with intricate embroidery, a practice called **tatreez**. Embroidery patterns and colors can vary by region and social status. Here are some of the common types of traditional Palestinian garments for women: Thobe: The thobe is the foundation of Palestinian women's traditional dress. It's a long, loose-fitting garment that can be made from a variety of materials, such as cotton, linen, or wool. Izar: The Izar is a long rectangular piece of cloth that is wrapped around the lower body. It can be worn on its own or under a thobe. Abaya: The abaya is a long, flowing cloak that covers the entire body. It is often worn over a thobe or other clothing. Shayla: The shayla is a headscarf that is worn by many Palestinian women. It can be made from a variety of materials and can be worn in a variety of styles. Modern Palestinian women also wear a wide variety of clothing, including Western-style clothing, as well as Islamic clothing styles like the hijab. However, traditional dress remains an important part of Palestinian culture and identity, and is often worn for special occasions, such as weddings and holidays.

mission is to steal this garment from Palestinian women and plant it in the imagination and memory of the world as a heritage of the Zionists.

She loved to earn a lot of money for this easy task, even if she did not like the sight of the Palestinian dress that covered the body and closed the doors of greed. The body used to be a cheap commodity, and they marketed prostitution all over the world, exposing the woman's body to every buyer.

But she was unable to go ahead with the deal. These Palestinian dresses made her suffer from a strange disease. Whenever she wore it, she felt like a Palestinian, and a shiver of anger at the Zionist enemy ran through her body. She was overcome by the fever of repeating the phrase “**Free Palestine.**” And sometimes this curse took hold of her. She picked up road stones and fed them to every Zionist she knew in London, or met by chance or by prior arrangement.

The models, vibrant beings she usually imbued with confidence, wilted under its weight. Their smiles faltered, their eyes shadowed. This curse affected every model she worked with. She could no longer bear the sight of this dress in front of her...

The dress, once a canvas for her, now hung like a specter in her studio. Every stitch, every fold, seemed to mock her. A curse, insidious and cruel, had woven itself into the fabric, twisting her joy into dread whenever she laid eyes on it.

A bittersweet symphony played out in her trembling hand as she penned the letter. Each word resonated with a sorrow that transcended the lost project. Regret, thick and heavy, clung to her like the very fabric of the cursed dress. Yet, woven within it was a newfound respect. This wasn't just a garment; it was a living testament, a vibrant tapestry of resilience.

"It defies ownership," she wrote, her voice echoing in the cavernous silence of the studio. "This creation pulsates with a power that transcends possession. It embodies the spirit of a culture, its struggles and triumphs stitched into every thread." She paused, the weight of her words settling. "Perhaps it doesn't belong with us," she confessed, "but with someone who can truly understand its song. This dress seeks its own wearer, and its destiny lies elsewhere."

There was a profound sense of letting go in her words. The regret remained, a whisper in the air, but it was dwarfed by a newfound respect for the power the dress held.

## **Thief**

Years abroad revealed a dark secret: the soldier was a thief. Incarcerated in Spain for pilfering women's handbags, his cunning facade crumbled. When he immigrated to the Promised Land; the great cunning became a thief with the rank of a Zionist soldier serving a thief entity that stole an entire homeland from its people. Every financial trust he had was embezzled without any feeling of guilt. Embezzlement charges stripped him bare – the great strategist, exposed as a common pilferer.

Facing a court-martial and a hefty sentence, he made a shocking proposition. His act, he argued, was petty compared to the grand thefts that plagued their nation. "I'll return the money," he challenged the judge, a defiant glint in his eye, "if you return Palestine, which you stole to its people.

The courtroom held its breath. The judge, a man known for his iron fist, offered a chilling smile. The verdict? Acquittal.

The soldier walked free, a testament to a twisted justice system where grand larceny trumped petty theft. The stolen funds remained missing, a stark reminder that some thefts, it seemed, were more permissible than others.

## **Mercy**

A segment aired on a collaborative international satellite broadcast showcased the destruction of a family's residence. The accompanying narrative, however, framed the homeowner as a subversive element

In a media program broadcast jointly by several international satellite channels, the Zionist Channel presented a video report on the demolition of a house for the family of a Palestinian fighter. The broadcaster described him as a saboteur because he was defending his homeland.

A ring of soldiers, a stark silhouette against the rising sun, encircled a precarious house perched on a rocky bluff. No warning, no escape. Just a chilling silence, shattered by the grinding roar of bulldozers.

Inside, a family – a tapestry of generations – awoke to chaos. Bare feet pounded the dusty ground in a desperate scramble for an exit that didn't exist. Panic, a tangible entity, choked the air. Women, their screams lost in the mechanical symphony of destruction, clung to the olive drab uniforms, a final, heart-breaking anchor to their vanishing world.

The camera, a voyeur in this unfolding tragedy, pans across the scene. A demolished house, its walls gaping wounds, stands as a grim monument to the eviction. Then, a shift. A soldier kneels amidst the rubble, cradling a frightened red-

haired cat. The zoom tightens, blurring the background chaos.

On television screens, a newscaster's voice, heavy with manufactured empathy, praises the soldier's act of compassion. The applause from the studio audience feels hollow against the backdrop of a community fractured, lives uprooted.

The rescued cat, a fleeting symbol of hope amidst the devastation, becomes the narrative. But the true cost remains hidden – families displaced; memories buried under rubble. The audience, spoon-fed a manufactured tearjerker, misses the bigger picture. This is a stark reminder of the media's power to manipulate focus, leaving the true tragedy unseen.

## **Deception**

The Zionist settler rose angrily like a rooster blowing on a dunghill. He prepared for the settlement official to click with his words, coming from the depths of his despicable, angry soul. A crowd of settlers gathered around him. The settlement director guessed that they agreed to a certain position.

"Where is the promised land of plenty?" the frustrated settler demanded, his voice echoing in the desolate landscape. "We were promised abundance, yet all we find are hardship, devastation, and constant fear. Where is the honey and milk that we immigrated here for? All we see around us is death, destruction, ruin and fear.

The official, unfazed, adjusted his small hat, which was falling on his head like bird droppings and gestured vaguely towards the sky with a single finger. "The prosperity you seek," he declared, "may not be found on earthly soil. Look beyond, to the heavens, for that is where true reward awaits, honey and milk are not here, but they are there in heaven.

## **Man**

Military life had hardened her, twisting her into a shadow of her former self. The rigid structure became a breeding ground for a different kind of combat – one fought with favors and a cheapened spirit. Promotions and perks became the currency for survival, a Faustian bargain that stripped her of her dignity.

Then came the illness, a physical manifestation of the rot that had set in. The prison, a reflection of a broken system, ostracized her. Worse, it twisted her suffering into a weapon. She became an instrument of torture, forced to inflict pain and a terrible disease upon others. The aim wasn't just physical suffering, but a final, cruel act – to infect them with shame in front of their loved ones.

This is a story not of a bad woman, but of a good person broken by a corrupt system. It's a chilling reminder of how power dynamics and desperation can twist even the most resilient souls.

The man with the gentle smile, an anomaly in this brutal place, refused to crumble. His eyes, pools of calm defiance, mirrored the disquiet churning within her. Guilt, a long-dormant emotion, stirred in her gut, a viper awakening from its slumber. It was an unwelcome sensation amidst the steely resolve she'd painstakingly forged.

His unwavering spirit, a stark contrast to the broken men around him, exposed the flimsy justifications she clung to. It was a brutal self-confrontation, the chasm between her duty and her humanity laid bare. His final moments, devoid of fear and brimming with a quiet dignity, shattered the walls she'd built around her heart. In the face of his nobility, the justifications she'd clung to crumbled to dust. Now, adrift in a sea of doubt, she was left with a chilling question: who was the monster in this cage, him or her?

## RPG

They were everywhere. In the desolate camp, promised to be a swift operation, a victory celebrated with stolen laurels. Yet, they were the ones scrambling for escape, fleeing before a tide of unwavering resistance. Fighting children, their faces devoid of fear, their eyes locked on a single purpose. Once again, he saw small, emaciated Palestinian children in front of him, carrying RPG shells. They all have the same face. Every time someone was killed by a shell or dozens of bullets pierced him; he would see a child with the same face attacking him again. They are everywhere, here in this Palestinian camp in Lebanon.

The desolate camp, once promised as a quick victory, now echoed with the desperate scramble for escape. They, the invaders, were the ones fleeing, a tide of resistance rising before them. In the faces of the children, there was no fear, only an unwavering determination. These weren't children, not in the way he remembered them. These were specters of innocence lost, their eyes burning with cold fury. Every child soldier he saw was a haunting echo – the same gaunt frame, the same haunted gaze.

One face, forever etched in his memory, became his personal tormentor. A child, eyes blazing with a defiance that mirrored his own terror, stood his ground. He didn't run, didn't flinch. He fired, and the world went red. A comrade fell. And with

a final, brutal twist of fate, the tank he sought refuge in became his tomb.

The war raged on, the children, phantoms of a stolen childhood, continuing their fight. But for him, the battle was over. The line between soldier and victim blurred, leaving behind a chilling truth: the war had claimed more than just lives, it had devoured a piece of his soul.

He woke with a gasp, the sheets damp with sweat, the terror clinging to him like a shroud. His wife sat beside him, her face etched with concern and a weary acceptance. "Again?" she whispered; her voice heavy with a burden he shared.

He nodded, unable to speak past the lump in his throat. Shame gnawed at him, a constant reminder of the powerlessness that haunted his every waking moment. "I can't escape them," he finally rasped, his voice hoarse.

"See the doctor," she said gently, her hand reaching for his. "Maybe he can help you outrun these demons."

He looked at her, his own reflection staring back, a hollow echo of the man he once was. "No escape," he whispered, the words tasting like ash. "This face... it follows, a harbinger of the hell that awaits."

Her hand, a lifeline in the storm within him, offered a fleeting moment of solace. But in the corner of his vision, the ghost of the child soldier stood, a chilling reminder that the torment

– both in the darkness of sleep and the glaring light of reality  
– was a relentless pursuit. It's a face that haunts me until it  
leads me to hell.

The stench of burnt gunpowder and dust clung to his senses, a constant reminder of the nightmare that clung to him like a second skin. He closed his eyes, the faces of the children flashing behind his eyelids. Emaciated, hollowed-out eyes held a chilling defiance, a single, identical face staring back at him with a haunting intensity.

## Sharon<sup>1</sup>

He served a cause he believed in, a homeland he felt obligated to defend. Kindness simmered beneath the surface, a stark contrast to the brutality his duty demanded. He was a man of surprising sensitivity, burdened by a secret loathing – the color red. It wasn't the vibrancy that repelled him, but the crimson tide it represented – the blood spilled in the name of his cause.

His greatest torment wasn't the act of killing itself, but the act of witnessing it. He performed his grim duty with eyes squeezed shut, his soul recoiling from the inevitable carnage. It wasn't a hobby, not a source of pleasure, but a horrific necessity he endured, all the while yearning for a different life, a life where the color red wouldn't be synonymous with a battlefield nightmare. He serves his alleged homeland,

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<sup>1</sup>- **Ariel Sharon**: Personal Information: Full Name: Ariel Sharon (Hebrew: אַרְיֵאל שָׂרׁוֹן)

Date of Birth: February 26, 1928 Place of Birth: Kfar Malal, British Mandate of Palestine (present-day Israel) Date of Death: January 11, 2014 Nationality: Israeli Education Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Law) Military Service Haganah (pre-Israeli underground militia)

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) - General (retired) Commander of Unit 101 (retaliatory commando unit) Southern Command (during 1967 Six-Day War) Head of the Northern Command Head of the Training Department Political Career Likud party member Minister of Agriculture (1977-1981) Minister of Defense (1981-1983) Minister of Industry and Trade (1990-1992) Minister of Housing and Construction (1990-1992) Foreign Minister (1998-1999) Leader of the Likud party (1999-2005) Prime Minister of Israel (2001-2006) Controversies Involvement in the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon Order to withdraw Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

Israel. He is kind and has a sensitive nature, even if he tramples on all of humanity. He hates the color red because he hates seeing blood, and therefore he does not practice his sinful hobby, which is killing Palestinians, except with his eyes and soul closed so that he does not see the blood of his victims.

## Slave

He came from Ethiopia, fleeing after ambitions and illusions. He claimed to be Jewish in order to achieve a comfortable life, as promised by the Zionist rabbi he desired, his family and many of the people of his Ethiopian city, and he released them as many flock into the embrace of a Zionist. A colony where security, comfort and upscale human treatment are cherished. His fellow Zionists treated him like a slave. All they gave him was hatred and contempt, some food, a cement box to live in with his family, and a vile broom with which to sweep the establishment where they had appointed him as a servant. Now he is a real slave, a **Jewish Flashas**<sup>1</sup> slave. White Jews make fun of him because he is black and lucky. He longs for freedom. He decides to recover his stolen self and return to his true homeland. He stays away from

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<sup>1</sup>- **Beta Israel (also known as Ethiopian Jews or Falashas)**: are a group of Jews who have lived in Ethiopia for centuries. They are believed to be descendants of Jews from the ancient Kingdom of Israel who migrated to Africa. Beta Israel has faced persecution throughout history, but they have managed to preserve their culture and religion.

In 1977, Israel began airlifting Beta Israel to the country. Nearly 80,000 people were airlifted in a series of covert operations. Beta Israel faced difficulties integrating into Israeli society, but they have made significant progress in recent years.

Beta Israel now live all over Israel and are an integral part of Israeli society. They serve in the Israeli military, work in a variety of professions, and contribute to Israeli culture. Here are some additional facts about Beta Israel: They are believed to be descendants of Jews from the ancient Kingdom of Israel who migrated to Africa. They lived in Ethiopia for centuries. They faced persecution throughout history. Israel began airlifting them to the country in 1977. They faced difficulties integrating into Israeli society. They have made significant progress in recent years. They now live all over Israel. They are an integral part of Israeli society. They serve in the Israeli military. They work in a variety of professions. They contribute to Israeli culture

Famous Ethiopian Jews: Some famous Ethiopian Jews include:

Pnina Tamano-Shata: She is the first Ethiopian-born woman to serve as a minister in the Israeli government. Eden Alene: She is a singer who represented Israel at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2021. Berhane Asfaw: He is a world-renowned mathematician who has made significant contributions to the field of number theory.

Palestine, where he has no homeland. When he lands with his wife and family on Ethiopian soil, he returns free again. Aching for a better life, he left his Ethiopian home, a tapestry of vibrant colors and rich traditions. Dreams of comfort and security, whispered by a persuasive voice, led him and his family across continents. They embraced a new land, their hearts filled with hope and trepidation.

Instead of the promised haven, they found themselves confined in a concrete shell, far from the warmth of their community. The air held a strange chill, laced with prejudice and misunderstanding. His skills, honed under the African sun, were reduced to the menial task of wielding a broom, his worth measured in scornful glances. The color of his skin, once a source of pride, became a target for mockery. He yearned for the freedom of his childhood, the laughter beneath the acacia trees, the stories whispered under the starlit sky. He realized that true belonging resided not in external promises but in the embrace of his heritage. With a quiet resolve, he gathered his family and embarked on a new journey, one that led them home. As the familiar soil embraced their feet, he felt a wave of liberation wash over him. He had shed the illusions and reclaimed his authentic self, finding his roots not in promised comfort, but in the rich tapestry of his true homeland.

## Book

His book, “**Ethnic Cleansing<sup>1</sup> in Palestine,<sup>2</sup>**” is the holiest thing he ever accomplished. He treats him with pride, care, and reverence, and quickly and carefully escapes from the racist Zionists who stone him for treason, spit on him, and

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<sup>1</sup>- **The term "ethnic cleansing**»: is highly charged and refers to the forced removal of a specific ethnic group from a certain territory. It's a complex and sensitive topic, especially when discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Here are some resources that can help you explore this topic in a nuanced way:

Books:

"The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine" by Ilan Pappé (represents a Palestinian perspective)

"My Promised Land" by Ari Shavit (represents an Israeli perspective)

Documentaries:

"The Invisible Thread" (explores the personal stories of Israelis and Palestinians)

"Palestine is Still the Issue" (examines the historical context)

<sup>2</sup>- "**The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine**" by Ilan Pappé: is a book that examines the 1948 Palestinian exodus from the perspective of a new historian. New historians challenge the traditional Zionist narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and focus on the role of Zionist militias in the expulsion of Palestinians. Pappé argues that the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 was a deliberate and planned act by Zionist forces, which he characterizes as ethnic cleansing. He bases his argument on archival evidence, including documents from Zionist militias such as the Haganah and Irgun. The book has been controversial since its publication in 2006. Critics of the book argue that Pappé exaggerates the role of Zionist militias in the expulsion and downplays the role of Arab violence in leading to the Palestinian exodus. Supporters of the book argue that it provides important evidence of the Zionist role in the Palestinian exodus and that it challenges the traditional narrative of the conflict. Here are some of the key points of Pappé's book: The expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 was a central plank of Zionist ideology from the beginning of the Zionist movement. Zionist militias deliberately planned and carried out the expulsion of Palestinians in order to create a Jewish state in Palestine. The expulsion of Palestinians was not a spontaneous reaction to Arab violence, but rather a pre-meditated plan. The book has been widely debated by historians and Middle East scholars. It is an important contribution to the understanding of the 1948 Palestinian exodus and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

flog him, saying: “**Ilan Pappé**<sup>1</sup>, you traitor, you agent of the Arabs.”

He does not care about what he suffers, but finally his bold pen wrote the whole truth and with complete fairness after he realized the brutality of his people. Finally, he can live in peace and die content. He wrote the truth that his people wanted to feed into oblivion.

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<sup>1</sup> - **Ilan Pappé** :Israeli historian, political scientist, and former politician.Professor at the University of Exeter in the UK.Founder of the Haifa branch of the Emile Touma Institute for Palestinian Studies.Self-described as an anti-Zionist.Challenger of Traditional Zionist Narrative: Pappé is considered a "new historian" who critiques the traditional Zionist narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He argues that the conflict is not simply a matter of competing narratives but has historical roots in the expulsion of Palestinians from their land in 1948, which he terms "ethnic cleansing."Criticisms: Pappé's work has received both praise and criticism. Supporters commend his work for challenging dominant narratives and bringing attention to the Palestinian perspective. However, critics argue that his methodology and interpretation of historical events are biased and inaccurate. They point out a lack of evidence for some of his claims and accuse him of omitting counter-arguments or downplaying historical context.Considerations when engaging with Pappé's work:Critical Engagement: It's crucial to approach Pappé's work critically. Consider the historical context, methodological choices, and potential biases. Research different perspectives on the topic to form an informed opinion.Sensitivity: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complex and sensitive issue. It's crucial to use language and engage in discussions with respect for all parties involved.

## Museum

The air in **the Museum of Man in Paris**<sup>1</sup>. hung heavy with the echoes of lost civilizations. A student's voice, crisp and youthful, narrated tales of vanished tribes and forgotten peoples, victims of history's brutal hand. The man shuffled along, a grim smile playing on his lips whenever the student described an entire culture erased by conquest. **The Zionist rabbi**<sup>2</sup> shakes his head with joy whenever he stands before the nation that was extinct at the hands of the sinful occupier.

Reaching the display dedicated to an "extinct" nation, his heart, if it could be called that, swelled with a perverse

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<sup>1</sup> - **The Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man)**: is an anthropology museum in Paris, France. It was established in 1937 by Paul Rivet for the 1937 Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne. It is one of the seven departments of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle (MNHN). The Musée de l'Homme occupies most of the Passy wing of the Palais de Chaillot in the 16th arrondissement.

<sup>2</sup>- **Zionist rabbi**: is a term that can describe a rabbi who supports the ideology of Zionism, which advocates for the creation and maintenance of a Jewish state. However, it's important to be aware that: Spectrum of Views: Zionism encompasses a wide range of opinions and approaches. Some Zionist rabbis may hold more traditional views focused on the religious and historical significance of the Land of Israel, while others may have more progressive views on issues like peace with Palestinians or the inclusion of different Jewish denominations within the state. Diversity within Rabbinat: It's important to avoid generalizations about rabbis based solely on their stance on Zionism. Rabbis come from diverse backgrounds and hold varying viewpoints on various theological and social issues.

satisfaction. Here, at last, was vindication. Here was proof of their supposed enemies' barbarity!

But as the student continued, detailing the harrowing events that led to their near-destruction, a flicker of something unexpected crossed the man's face. His smile faltered, replaced by a mask of impotent rage. At the end of the tour, the rabbi backed down; He began to bray and cry with the sorrow of a pig mourning for food in a dunghill that he could not enter. His shy student asked him with concern and confusion: What makes you cry? The rabbi replied while wiping his snot with his sleeve: They are the Palestinians. They embarrassed us in front of the world and history when they refused to exterminate them, so we will be relieved of them and bring them into this museum for display only."They... they lived," he rasped, his voice raw with something akin to disappointment. "They refused to be wiped out. They defied us! Now we're the ones on display, a relic of hatred preserved for all to see."

## Hobby

The best Zionist pastime is seeing the heads of Palestinian children quickly roll off their bodies. He practices his hobby in all Palestinian camps. He finds special pleasure in chasing the heads that were forcibly escaped from their bodies in the Sabra and Shatila camp. He has long enjoyed the small Arab heads sacrificed in the **Bahr al-Baqar**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>**Bahr al-Baqar: A Tragedy Etched in Memory** Bahr al-Baqar, a small village nestled in the fertile plains of Egypt, carries a heavy burden of remembrance. On a fateful day in 1970, a dark shadow fell upon this peaceful community, forever etching a tragedy into its collective memory. The sun had barely begun its descent when the earth itself seemed to tremble. Warplanes, bearing the insignia of a distant land, tore through the pristine sky, unleashing their deadly cargo upon the unsuspecting village. Their target: the Bahr el-Baqar primary school, a place of laughter and learning, where dreams and futures blossomed under the watchful gaze of dedicated teachers. In the ensuing pandemonium, the air filled with the agonizing shrieks of children, their innocence shattered by the deafening roar of explosions. The school, once a symbol of hope and education, lay in ruins, a testament to the senseless destruction. Amidst the debris and smoke, the cries of the wounded and the wails of the bereaved pierced the heartbroken silence. The world watched in horror as news of the Bahr el-Baqar massacre unfolded. Forty-six innocent children, their lives barely begun, were among the casualties. Their laughter, once a symphony of joy, was silenced forever. The tragedy reverberated across the globe, a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of conflict and the fragility of human life. Today, Bahr al-Baqar stands as a poignant symbol of the enduring spirit of its people. Though the scars of the past remain visible, etched not only on the landscape but also in the hearts of its residents, the determination to heal and move forward is unwavering. Memorials stand as silent sentinels, bearing the names of the lost children, a constant reminder of the tragedy that befell them. Educational initiatives ensure that the memories of the victims are kept alive, while new generations are instilled with the values of peace, tolerance, and respect for human life. Bahr al-Baqar's story is not simply a historical footnote but a stark reminder of the devastating cost of conflict and the importance of safeguarding the innocence of children. It serves as a call to action, urging humanity to strive for a future where the playgrounds of children echo only with laughter, not the deafening roar of war.

and **Qana**<sup>1</sup> schools.

And when his hobby ignites. With intense thirst, his spirit approached his son's head and attacked him with a cleaver. And keep it away from his body. He starts watching the Zionist blood fountain. And it grows louder and tossed into the space of his son's bed.

He laughs greedily, contentedly, and happily, but he is still in a feverish thirst to hunt the head of a Palestinian child.

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<sup>1</sup> **Qana:** A Tapestry Woven with Hope and Heartache Qana, a town in southern Lebanon, carries a complex and multifaceted story, woven with threads of resilience, sorrow, and an enduring spirit. Nestled among olive groves and vineyards, its history stretches back centuries, a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage. However, Qana's name frequently surfaces in headlines for reasons far removed from its idyllic setting. The town has tragically become synonymous with devastating events that have inflicted deep wounds on its people. A Land Steeped in History: Qana boasts a rich tapestry of history. Archaeological evidence suggests settlements dating back to the Canaanite period. It holds historical significance for both Christians and Muslims, with several religious sites scattered across its landscape. The town even witnessed the first miracle attributed to Jesus Christ in the Christian faith – the turning of water into wine at a wedding feast. Echoes of Conflict: Unfortunately, Qana's history also bears the scars of conflict. The town has been caught in the crossfire of regional tensions and wars on several occasions. The most notorious instance occurred in 1996, when a United Nations compound sheltering civilians was struck by artillery fire, resulting in the deaths of over 100 people, many of them children. This incident, along with other tragic events, continues to leave an indelible mark on the collective memory of Qana's people. Yet, amidst the narratives of hardship, there lies a powerful story of resilience. Facing Adversity with Strength: The people of Qana have demonstrated remarkable strength and resolve in the face of immense adversity. Despite the tragedies they have endured, they remain firmly rooted in their land, rebuilding their lives with unwavering determination. Qana's spirit finds expression in its vibrant community life, its bustling marketplace, and its unwavering commitment to education and cultural preservation. Local initiatives promote peace and understanding, fostering a sense of hope for a future free from violence. A Symbol of Hope and Remembrance: The town of Qana stands as a poignant symbol of the human spirit's ability to endure hardship and rebuild in the face of devastation. It serves as a reminder of the devastating cost of conflict and the importance of fostering peace and understanding. While Qana's history carries within it the echoes of heartache, it also whispers tales of resilience and an enduring hope for a brighter tomorrow.

## **Medal of Valor**

He received the Third Class Medal of Heroism from the Zionist Army, in recognition of his important role in the complete annihilation of a Palestinian children's school.

They called him a hero. They named some new-borns after him. Zionist newspapers published his image as a national hero. The revelers quickly forgot about him. The newspapers left him. The media turned their backs to him, and his medal lay rusty in one of his desk drawers. The faces of the Palestinian children he killed with a single missile continued to haunt him day and night, digging their nails into the depths of his soul, which lived in an endless earthly hell.

## **myth**

In the shadow of a mythical, invincible army, he trained. Drills pounded the myth into his soul - an unbreakable force, destined for victory. Each movement, each thought fueled his insatiable thirst for conquest. He craved the day he would crush not just guerrillas, but the very world itself, his loyalty a shield against any doubt. After he passed the intensive course that received at the head of his army administration, he saw that he was a soldier in a legendary, unbeatable army. The cycle fed him the myth of the chosen people and the invincible army. He is now ready to go out on any mission assigned to him in order to crush all the guerrillas and even the entire world. As long as he is a soldier in this legendary army

The night before his first mission, he drowned his remaining anxieties in alcohol. Victory, he believed, was a mere formality. No need to waste precious energy. He envisioned a swift triumph, a triumphant return to the glorious ranks.

His first mission was to crush the Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon. On the night he was assigned his mission, he drank a lot of alcohol. There is nothing wrong with wasting his energies, as he does not need them in this battle, and he will not wait long until he reaps victory and annihilates the Palestinians. Then he returns to his den.

Finally, he went out on his promised military outing. But dawn revealed a reality far harsher than myth. Their opponents weren't the ragtag guerrillas he expected. They were young, defiant rebels, their eyes burning with a righteous fury. They saw the "legendary" army for what it truly was - a force of needless destruction. No need for seasoned veterans He did not meet any of the guerrillas. He and his army faced young rebels who saw him and his army as so despicable that they did not call in the senior guerrillas and rained RPGs on him and his group. he walked back, not a conqueror, but a broken pawn in a game he never understood. The myth, once a shield, now hung heavy, a reminder of his shattered pride and the bitter cost of blind obedience. He became a symbol, not of an invincible army, but of the devastating consequences of believing in fairy tales.

Within a few hours, he was a captured soldier in the hands of the Little Titans. They did not kill him as he thought. Rather, they humiliated him and released him so that he could return alive to those deceivers who convinced him that he was a soldier in a legendary, invincible army in order to spit in their faces., his dreams of conquest shattered. The "Little Titans," as they called themselves, didn't kill him. They saw his capture as a weapon, a living testament to the hollow lies he had been fed. They released him, a walking embodiment of the myth's deceit, to return to those who had nurtured his delusions.

## **Memory loss**

They told him more than half a century ago while teaching him the principles of Zionism: The elderly Palestinians will die and their children will be forgotten. He was proud of the small faces of the Palestinians and ordered them to be put in prison as punishment for stoning the Zionist soldiers. So, he ordered that the punishment be severe for them. He cursed them and cursed their children, and spat in their faces until his saliva dried up and he almost choked on it. The door was closed after they left and they were chained to torment and hell. They were blindfolded. He began to echo the sound of their cries for help that shook the sky. He rejoiced in their suffering and gloated over them. Then he started snoring and crying loudly. He swallowed his generous tears. He said they will not forget. Decades had passed, etched not just on his face, but in the lines of his soul. They echoed the words whispered to him in his youth, during the bitter lessons on upholding colonial power: "The conquered fade, their names lost to the winds, their children forgotten." He remembered their faces, young and defiant, framed by fiery anger when they dared to hurl stones at the soldiers. His pride, twisted into a monstrous form, had demanded their punishment. He had ordered their imprisonment, a severance from their own lives. Curses spewed from his lips; venom laced with hate. He had rained insults upon them, his spittle a physical manifestation of his disdain, until his throat grew raw and his

voice hoarse. The heavy oak door slammed shut, leaving them in the bowels of their torment, their cries for help muffled by the thick stone walls. He had stood there, relishing their despair, intoxicated by the power he wielded. But as the echoes faded, a different sound filled the silence - his own ragged snores, punctuated by choked sobs. He swallowed the tears that welled in his eyes, tears not of regret, he told himself, but of the burden of power, the loneliness it carved within him. His lips moved silently, forming the very words he once believed: "They will not forget." But the weight of those words now crushed him, a haunting reminder of the cost of his actions, the echoes of which would forever resonate within the desolate chambers of his soul.

## **Aromatic plant**

She lives on the second floor of an ancient Jerusalemite house that the Zionist occupation took from its people and owned. She was supposed to do all the evil and harm she could think of to disturb the Jerusalemite family living in the basement and force them to leave. But she was unable to do so because of her psychologically benevolent nature, for which her husband and his family hate her. They constantly demand that she abandon her good qualities in favor of their ambitions and loyalty to their Zionist entity.

She placed her hands on a basin of aromatic plants that belonged to the owner of the house, among the furniture and clothes that she found on the second floor of the assassinated house. She loved this aromatic plant, which smelled good and sweet. But the plant has been wilting constantly since I took control of it.

I guessed that the plant loves its people. This plant misses the landlady who planted and cared for it. She picked up the small basin and brought it down the stairs. The Jerusalemite woman was sitting in a small area of the garden, braiding the hair of one of her daughters. She placed the basin of the aromatic plant in front of her and said to her in a Palestinian accent that she almost mastered: “This plant wants you”

The Jerusalemite woman replied without looking at her: “This is normal, as trees know their people and reject strangers”.

The scent of rosemary filled the air, a bittersweet fragrance

that clung to Yasmin despite her efforts. It was a remnant of the life before, a life stolen by forces beyond their control. She lived above, in a space that felt borrowed, while the family below occupied the beating heart of the house – the garden. Yasmin was burdened by the task. Her husband and his family viewed her as a weapon to be wielded, a tool of intimidation meant to drive out the occupants below. But Yasmin, with her gentle touch and compassionate soul, found herself incapable of such cruelty. Every harsh word caught in her throat; every manipulative tactic tasted like ashes on her tongue.

The rosemary plant, once vibrant and lush, mirrored her internal struggle. It wilted under her care, its life force dwindling. Yasmin understood. It yearned for the woman who had nurtured it, whose hands had known the earth beneath its roots. The plant, in its silent way, echoed the ache Yasmin carried within herself.

One day, compelled by an unspoken understanding, Yasmin descended the stairs, the rosemary clutched in her trembling hands. The woman below, with hair woven into intricate braids, looked up in surprise. Yasmin, hesitant but determined, offered the plant, her voice barely a whisper, "It wants you."

The woman's gaze, filled with a lifetime of loss, softened for a fleeting moment. "Trees know their own," she said, her

voice raspy with unshed tears. "They recognize the love that nurtured them, even when stolen."

The moment passed, leaving a heavy silence in its wake. Yet, in that shared exchange, Yasmin found a fragile hope. Perhaps, like the rosemary, she too could find a way to thrive again, not by wielding a weapon, but by letting her true nature bloom.

## **Student**

He must be his teacher's secret, and this is his greatest opportunity to be his loyal disciple who follows his path. He is the one who taught him that scientific research and field education are goals that permit everything humane or brutal. Here, the end justifies the means, regardless of all morals, so it was appropriate for him to explain to them the body of the Palestinian prisoner while he was alive. Because he wants to show them how vital organs work and their owner is alive. He fainted when he attended the first of these field lessons applied to the bodies of Palestinian prisoners. All he saw was the scalpel entering the prisoner's chest and his screams, which tore his vocal cords from the intensity of the pain. Then he entered a world of dark, sticky coma until his Zionist teacher, the doctor, woke him up with a slap that knocked out one of his teeth. He never fainted after that slap. His doctor teacher continued to use the scalpel on the bodies of Palestinian prisoners until he no longer cared about human pain, and he always wanted to play with his scalpel on his teacher's body, to prove to him that the student could surpass his teacher in satanic acts. Now he will achieve the pleasure he dreams of, as the awaited opportunity came to him on a golden platter. His teacher is paralyzed in front of him, paralyzed to move and speak. He suffers from a rare disease that deserves to be discovered, and he is responsible for it in this hospital. So, he could operate his scalpel there without

uttering a word or muttering a protest. Even if he was in severe pain, he would never waste this opportunity. He closes the door of the room with the key, puts it in his pocket, takes out his scalpel, and turns on the light. He walks him across his teacher's body, starting from his neck, where the larynx appears, down to his lower abdomen. The professor's gaze flickered across the room, a predator assessing prey. His students, a mix of eager and apprehensive faces, awaited his next pronouncement. A cruel smile played on his lips. "The textbooks can only teach you so much," he rasped, his voice a chilling counterpoint to the sterile lecture hall. "True knowledge lies in the field." Our protagonist, the once bright-eyed student, now felt a knot of dread tighten in his stomach. He wasn't naive. He'd witnessed the professor's unorthodox methods before, the way ethics seemed to evaporate in his presence. But this... this was different. A cold thrill snaked down his spine.

"Tonight," the professor continued, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper, "we delve deeper. We witness the symphony of life, not in sterile diagrams, but in a living organism." A shiver ran through the students, a mixture of morbid curiosity and dawning horror. The "living organism" turned out to be a Palestinian prisoner, their struggles muffled by a thick cloth bag. The professor, his eyes gleaming with a detached fascination, began his macabre lesson. Each incision, a morbid brushstroke revealing the intricate

workings of the human body. The student, his loyalty now a suffocating weight, watched in horrified fascination. Was this the path he'd signed up for? Was knowledge worth such a price? The prisoner's whimpers, a constant counterpoint to the professor's clinical explanations, gnawed at his conscience. Here, in the cold light of the operating room turned torture chamber, the ends, however noble the professor might paint them, did not justify the barbaric means. He had to act. But how? Disobeying the professor could mean his own demise. This was his greatest test, a twisted loyalty war brewing within him. Would he become a disciple of this dark science, or would he find the courage to defy his mentor and fight for a sliver of humanity in this descent into the abyss?

## Ozone

A gathering fueled by prejudice and hate unfolded. They offered empty thanks to a deity for creating a convenient scapegoat, a singular group to blame for all societal ills. Every conceivable misfortune, from petty theft to world wars, was attributed to this targeted population. Diseases, tragedies, and conflicts – all their fault. Even death itself, they claimed, was their invention. This scapegoating reached its peak when the group, unable to explain the ozone layer's depletion, pinned the blame on their chosen target. They gathered and thanked God who created the Palestinians to be a scapegoat for all calamities, tribulations and difficulties, and in one session they attributed all human crimes to them and that they were the ones who corrupted the world, stole all the treasures, and fought peaceful peoples. They spread diseases, sorrows, tragedies and misfortunes on earth and ignited the flames of past, present and future world wars. They are the cause of disputes and conflicts everywhere. Rather, they are the ones who invented death and imposed it on man. Therefore, they must be tortured, killed and displaced.

And at the end of the list of crimes attributed to Palestinians, living and dead, who remain nothing in the mysterious unseen. They found that they could not explain the cause of the hole in the ozone layer, which would cost humanity

invaluable problems. The shortest person present at this world summit smiled as he attributed the crimes of the universe to the Palestinians. He was wearing a black hollow hat. A foul odor stuck to his head, and he said with joy and relief, as his stomach expanded and flabby: This matter is easy and simple. It must be the Palestinians who violated the ozone layer in a moment of recklessness. The attendees cheered with joy and relief at this proposal, and they all voted to agree to assign this dangerous environmental charge - if it is real - to the miserable Palestinians who spoil everything that is placed in their hands, to the point that their tampering has extended to the ozone layer that they have pierced. A collective cheer erupted, a sigh of relief that their irrational prejudice had found a seemingly perfect target.

# ***Enemy Melodies***



## Statue

In the dawn of time, a Palestinian master sculptor molded his homeland from dreams, leaving its beauty etched in every statue. One fateful night, a shadow fell: a Jewish usurper shattered his paradise, casting him and his lineage adrift.

The first Palestinian man, forever marked by his stolen home, became a wanderer. He carried its essence within him, a whispered memory guiding his steps. His children, scattered across the world, carried its echoes too. Each in their corner, they sculpted – not mere figures, but fragments of a lost paradise.

Generations passed; whispers became legends. The yearning for their ancestral home, a constant ache in their hearts. Then, a flicker of hope. They rose, a tide of longing, and drove back the usurper. Home was reclaimed, yet a strange restlessness remained.

The first Palestinian's spirit, it seemed, had woven itself into their very being. Though they rebuilt, recreated, their creations mirrored the lost homeland. They built grand cities, flourishing empires, yet each bore a whisper of the stolen paradise.

And so, the cycle continues. With every generation, the memory of the original homeland dims, yet the yearning

remains. They leave, they build, they return – a story etched in the very fabric of their existence. Will they ever truly find rest, or is their journey an endless loop, forever chasing a phantom paradise?

## **The wind and the dogs**

They were able to kill a gigantic number of Palestinians. They mutilated their bodies. Burned their skulls. They crushed their bones. They scattered their ashes in the wind to rest from that ghost called the return of the Palestinian people to their homeland. Their voices were barking with blissful ecstasy as they said: We are Israel, and the Palestinians have become nothingness.

The wind mocked their hoarse barking. It collected the ashes of the Palestinians that were scattered by its breezes. It kneaded it with the water of immortality. So, the Palestinians rose again, descending from a phoenix that never dies.

The crimson sands whispered tales of atrocity. A whirlwind of violence had swept through, leaving a desolate silence in its wake. The victors, voices hoarse with hate, proclaimed their triumph – a pyre of innocents reduced to ash, scattered by the wind.

But the wind, an ancient witness, held a different memory. It cradled the remnants, not with indifference, but with a promise. Each grain of sand, imbued with the essence of the fallen, held the spark of resilience. As the wind danced across the dunes, it whispered a defiant lullaby: "They may have tried to erase us, but we are the wind. We scatter, yet we gather. We are the ever-shifting sands, and from our depths, we will rise again."

## **sickle**

The Palestinian landed on the ground carrying a sickle. Nothing more. He only loved his sickle for the land he reaps its treasures.

The Palestinian, calloused hands wrapped tight around a gleaming sickle, a symbol of toil and survival, landed hard on the dusty earth. He owned nothing more, his heart pledged solely to the land that yielded its bounty to his unwavering labour.

Greedily Strangers came to rob the land from the sickle in love with it

After the strangers who escaped from the grip of the Palestinian sickle left, the sickle returned to devote itself to the love of the land, and sings in the hands of the loving farmers .

Greed, a serpent with eyes of polished gold, slithered in, seeking to plunder the land this man cradled with his calloused affection.

A clash, a whirlwind of steel against desperation. The alien hands that sought to despoil fled, leaving only the echoing silence and the glint of the sickle, still clutched in the Palestinian's grip.

Now, cleansed by the struggle, the sickle hums a song of resilience in the hands of its master. A love ballad sung in the callouses and sweat, a testament to the unwavering bond between the farmer and the land.

## **Cravings**

the land itself bore the deepest scars. They robbed her and scattered her people. And the land carried axes that they had split for thousands of years to cultivate it. She craved their features, their voices, their smell, their patience, and their dreams. Every groove carved by their tools, every path they walked, echoed their absence.

And she gave birth. She gave birth to fedayeen with the features of their mother, warriors born from the very essence of the stolen land. These fighters, with the faces of the lost people, carried the land's yearning for its return. Once again, the land's name was whispered on the wind: a name of resilience, of longing, of unwavering hope.

She continued to be pregnant and crave and give birth to fedayeen while chanting her eternal heavenly name. The land, a silent yet potent force, fueled the fight for her return. Her name became a battle cry, a promise etched in the hearts of her children. The cycle continued, not just of leaving, building, and returning, but of the land itself birthing resistance, forever pregnant with hope for the day her stolen children would return to her embrace.

## **Resurrection**

When the final thread is spun, and the world unravels, a different call will echo. All humanity, bound by their deeds, will gather. The weight of their choices, heavy stones around their necks. But the Palestinians, they will stand tall, bearing on their heads not burdens, but the very soil of their stolen Palestine.

Theirs is a reckoning woven with love, a testament to an unyielding bond. For the love between a people and their land transcends even the tapestry of time, a love that whispers of a future where the threads will be reforged, and the lost masterpiece remade.



***The story collection is over  
Written in the diaspora***



## **Dr. Sanaa Shalan (Bint Na'imah)**

### **A Brief Overview**

Dr. Sanaa Shalan (bint Na'imah):

is a Jordanian of Palestinian descent, she is writer, academician, and media personality, is widely recognized as a prominent figure in Arabic literature. She is often referred to as "the Sun of Arabic Literature" and "the Lady of the Arabic Short Story." Her contributions to literature and her activism in various social causes have earned her international acclaim and numerous awards.



Dr. Shalan holds a Ph.D. in Modern Literature and Criticism with Distinction. She currently serves as an Professor of Modern Literature at the University of Jordan. Her prolific literary career has resulted in the publication of 75 works, encompassing novels, short story collections, children's literature, plays, travelogues, and comparative literature studies. She also has numerous published articles, essays, and regular columns in various Arabic publications.

Beyond her literary accomplishments, Dr. Shalan is a passionate advocate for human rights, women's empowerment, child welfare, and social justice. She serves

as the Honorary President of the International Peace and Friendship Organization for the years 2023-2024. Her activism has led to her participation in numerous local, Arab, and international conferences on literature, criticism, human rights, environmental issues, social justice, Arab heritage, human civilization, and comparative literature.

Dr. Shalan's works have been translated into multiple languages and have received critical acclaim worldwide. She has been the recipient of numerous international, Arab, local, and regional awards in the fields of novels, short stories, children's literature, scientific research, theater, travel literature, comparative literature, and media. Her plays have been performed on local and Arab stages.

Dr. Shalan's literary works have been the subject of extensive critical studies, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations across Jordan, the Arab world, and internationally. Her contributions to Arabic literature have established her as a pioneer and a role model for aspiring writers.

Dr. Shalan is a representative of many cultural and human rights institutions.

She is a partner in many Arab and international cultural and intellectual projects.

Her works have been honored with numerous awards, shields, honorary titles, cultural, community, and human rights representations.

Dr. Sanaa Shalan stands as a beacon of literary excellence and social activism. Her contributions to Arabic literature, her advocacy for human rights, and her dedication to social causes have left an indelible mark on the world stage. She continues to inspire and empower individuals through her writings and her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on society.

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