

**A GOOD REASON**



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# **A GOOD REASON**

SHORT STORIES

BY FADYA ELMAKDAH





# Dedication

To the frustrated people, who are lost in the chaos of their  
.feelings, and yet they still smile

To the refugees, who are seeking what is left from their  
.homelands, and yet still dreaming of returning

To the lovers who are fond of distant souls who will never  
.be their destiny any time, and yet still optimistic

To all mothers who are fighting in the battle of life, and yet  
still spreading love

To my children the seeds I grow in my heart and turned  
.into beautiful gardens

TO you who discovered my talent, gave me hope, and told  
.me that the world is good

You made me realize my dreams. You watered my wish  
.buds with love, so they bloomed

To your eyes Abdelkreem Elagramy

I dedicate these collections to you



# Introduction

When the winds of despair blow in our hearts and mess with our souls, we try to hang on to what our hands can reach. It may be a dream or perhaps it is a talent. Like the writing talent.

From words I weave different worlds and run away to them, they may save what can be saved. How writing is honest and how reality is fake.

In the world of the alphabet I am free from the constraints of time and place I travel where I want without a passport or identification card, without names or titles. The alphabet did not ask me about my nationality, religion, or my color. All I need is a free mind.

I unleash my thoughts; I let them flow smoothly and spontaneously. Thoughts may be memories, dreams or sort of reality and perhaps it is just an imaginary thought.

These stories were written in a moment of free expression. They are true stories that may have happened to some but in different ways. I did not find myself in the life that smashed me so I chose to find my tranquility in the world of my alphabet.





## **The Remnants of a Dream Deluged with Love**

She took a glance at the mirror as she always did. She did not belong to that kind of women, those women who spent a long time in front of the mirror. She never cared for such things like wearing make-up and accessorizing. Her motto was, “I will not fake who I am to please anyone. Whoever wants me as myself is welcome, and that who does not like me can kindly leave.”

She married twice, failed at both. However, she did not let herself be defeated or give up. Her first marriage did not last beyond the first year, and the break up was quick. What put her at ease was that she did not have children. During her second marriage, she remained forbearing. It was an utter fiasco, a traditional marriage. She was prideful and feigned strength. She thought, “Am I going to fail for the second time? What will people say about me?” She tried to persevere with all her might. She gave birth and became a mother. The years passed, as bittersweet as they may be. At the end, however, patience and tolerance were not enough. She collapsed beneath the burden that she bore and broke free from the shackles of marriage. Soon enough, she had moved to a house of her own and her children’s. She swiftly adapted to her new life sans any shackles.

Loneliness paid a visit. She was brimming with void and tedium, gnawing at her femininity especially after her children went to sleep. What left her most restless was the fact that she did not live as a woman during both marriages. She thought about getting married for the third time. “Why would I not?” she pondered. “I am still at my prime. I am

in my forties, but I do not feel like I have withered. On the contrary, I feel that I am capable of affection and love.”

She met her significant other. Coincidence was what brought them together, as if a magnetic force pushed them towards each other. In a heartbeat, the fires of love and ardour broke out between them and ignited the flames of alacrity and yearning. In the maze of love and ardour, they set off. Nothing broke them apart, not even the age difference. They did not mind it.

She was twice as old as him. At first, she ridiculed the situation, completely rejecting the idea of kindling a relationship that she knew was doomed with failure. Nevertheless, he held on, even begged her for a chance to prove that he was worthy of her. When she retreated to solitude, she would question the reason that it had to be him when others of similar age who were more steadfast proposed to her. She would turn them down and not give them the chance for anything more.

She thought of him and swam in the world of his ardour and love. Oh, how he captured her and marked her heart and soul his unbeknownst to her. She did not know how, where and when it happened. All that she knew is that she adored love because of him. She loved him with all of her heart, beyond the limitations of imagination and reality. What they had was even bigger. Their love continued to prosper and grow its roots like the roots of the olive tree in the soil. Even when they argued, she would rack her brain for a way to make it up for him, even if it was his fault. She did not know what sort of spell she was under. When he was incandescent, she became vulnerable, hollow

and defeated. She would feel frustrated and depressed just because he became distant, not answering her messages. She would write tens of them begging him to reply to her. She would beseech him to relieve her from her torment and ache, to swear on all that is dear to his heart. She would write him letters of love and ardour and send them, her tears scalding her cheeks and the flames of longing and torment smouldering her.

After many attempts, he would write her. When his message reached her, she would read it under the lens of ardour and love, smiling as soon as she glimpsed his name. Her heart would start beating again as if life had returned to it. She would call him hurriedly, his voice bringing her back down to Earth, bringing her soul to her body and her heart to her chest. Her words mixed up with tears of jubilation. She repeated one sentence, “I have missed you, you whose soul is my soul.”

As soon as he heard her voice, she brought him back with her whispers and raspy vocalizations. He admitted his yearning for her, how he was in agony being apart from her. He cursed at pique and woe. He blamed himself for allowing himself to be the cause of her tears, and apologized to her.

They competed over whose adoration surpassed the other. He divulged to her how he would always watch her, while she divulged her anguish caused by being away from him. Soon, she forgot about the suffering in the wake of his absence. They were lovers once more, the sun illuminating their souls. It was as if the quarreling brought them closer to each other and strengthened their bond. Their souls coalesced and the fires of their passion flared up in the apsis of ardour.

She spoke to him about her dreams and desires. She would say, “I had wished and dreamt of a lot before you, but I have abandoned all of them. I only wish for one thing. Do you know what it is?” He would, cunningly and subtly, respond, “What is it?” In a quavering and despondent voice, exhaling each sigh from the depths of her soul, she says, “I wish to return back twenty years so I can be of the same age as you.” He dissolved into laughter and responded, “But I like you as you are.”

The age difference between them haunted her, nevertheless. It left her sleepless, wishing for someone to invent a time machine that would turn back any person to whatever age he desired. She wished to be with him, to compensate for the years that she spent in torment, to colour her life before in the same colours that he paints it now. Her merriment did not linger. The ghost of separation came knocking. When she was alone, she ruminated on what follows love. “Was it sensible to think that our love will pursue regardless of the distance, the barriers and the obstacles? Was it sensible when I am the biggest obstacle, the colossal age difference between us?”

After careful deliberation, reasoning with her heart, soul and mind, she came to a decision. She had to go with her mind. Why persist when being with her would be detrimental to him? Abjectly, choking on words of separation, she says, “Go and live your life while you are still young. I will be of no avail to you.” He sought to change her mind. However, she cerebrated. She would not be heedless. She would not be a reason of affliction, “Have complete faith in me. Because I love you, I will have to distance myself from you.”

This time around, the separation was as bitter as gall. It was not a quarrel or a contention, but a cogent decision. She was agonized and anguished. She died another kind of death, a soulless corpse, a heart scantily pulsating. It is not the separation or desertion that excruciates us. It is what pursues. The expectancy, the nostalgia, the memories are what destroys us, dismantling us every day.

Her days were lacklustre, monotonous and tedious. How grim it is to intentionally surrender your heart and soul under the name of “a cogent decision”. Each day passed like the day before. Her life had become nugatory, like a novel’s pages torn until it became indecipherable.

She returned to motherhood, smothering her children in compassion and affection of which she was not exhausted in spite of everything. Though she did this not without, sometimes when her children went to their rooms to play, her thoughts going astray from them. Unintentionally, she thought of him with her heart and soul. Her longing made her tremble and the distance plagued her. The nostalgia extirpated her and the memories desensitized her. She turned on her cell phone unconsciously, reading their old messages, never jaded. She immediately opened the photo album; every picture was an event, a juncture, a memory.

The tears flowed down her cheeks. She barely murmured, her voice an amalgamation of love, ardour, yearning and despair, “I have missed you, you whose soul is my soul.” She asked herself, “What is there to be done now? Is he thinking of me? Does he miss me as much as I miss him?” She was brought back to reality as the shrieks of her children grew louder, rushing to her. She spared them with a smile and

compelled herself to laugh to conceal her vulnerability and frailty.

She indulged their humour by deluding them that she was going to the kitchen, and then she hid. When her absence prolonged, they attempted to find her. After long, she came out from where they did not expect her and frightened them with her stentorian laugh. They trembled in panic at first but then charged at her, each wanting a part of her.

They alternated hiding from her, exerting effort not to be caught by her. What was humorous to her was when they would hide in the diminutive clothing cupboards. What was even more humorous, replenishing her heart with jubilation, was her four year old hiding behind her in fear that she would not be able to find him. She would carry him, osculate him, embrace him with all endearment. She would whisper, "How about we take a nap?" She would go to her room, making them promise not to fight.

When she awakened and went to the bathroom to wash her face, something disconcerting occurred. Upon glancing at the mirror, as she usually did, she saw a face that did not belong to her. She was overcome with fright and sought refuge in praying. Was it possible that her home is haunted? She turned around and looked in every direction. However, there was not anyone but her.

She went back, taking trembling steps terrified of looking at the mirror. Nevertheless, she looked once more, more observantly. She was startled to realize that the face in the mirror was hers sans wrinkles, blemishes and signs of dotage. It was her face when she was on the brink of adolescence. She felt her face to ensure what she was seeing.

She smiled and was astonished for her teeth are white, her eyes luminescent and her lips rose-coloured. A full-throated laugh bellowed from her, “Oh my god! My wish has come true. I am young once more.” She danced in elation and delectation, hardly believing that she had become youthful again.

She remembered her significant other, how there was not an obstacle anymore. They could marry now. She went looking for her cell phone to give him the good news. While looking for her cell phone, she noticed something strange about her home, wondering why it was overcome by silence. “Where are my children?” she pondered. “Is it possible that they are still asleep? It is not usual for them to sleep at noon.” She looked for them around the house, but there were only three rooms. She was petrified, “Where am I? This is not my house.” She took a closer look, unbelieving that this is her home. She stumbled, her eyes congested with tears. “Where are my children?” she mumbled, “What happened to them?” Unconsciously, she called out their names, compelling herself to believe that they are in hiding as they always did when they had fun with her.

She started to look inside of every room, opening the cupboards, looking behind her perhaps finding her little one hiding as usual behind her. She tried to remain in control of herself, “Come on, children. Enough playing. Come out or you will be deprived of candy.” When the wait perpetuated, she collapsed to her feet. A vanquishing, remorseful cry wailed from her. She spoke, her voice spasmodic interlaced with perplexity and devastation, “Do I have to lose them to be with him? I am anguished. Oh my god! My heart!”

A wail bemoaned from the depths of her lamenting heart. Her limbs palpitated like that who is sickened with fever. She screamed hysterically, “Please come out and come back to me. I cannot live without you. You are the elation of my heart, the blossom of my life. I do not want to be young and I do not need anything from the world except you.” Her crying became bawling, a jumble of whimpering and torment. Abruptly, her body convulsed and she heard a voice calling her. It was a voice that she knew well; it was the voice of her eldest twelve year old daughter, “Mom! Mom! Mom! Wake up! Why are you crying in your sleep?”

She opened her eyes to see the face of her daughter trembling in fear, her heart hammering as if it was going to pop out of her chest. She inhaled then exhaled and with trembling hands, she clutched her daughter with a passion stronger than any of that on Earth.

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## **Estrangement and Despondency**

Our paltry feelings enervate us when the choices that we make let us down. All of our dreams are aborted on an arid land, ailed with drought when it was stormed with the exhales of sorrow and remorse. Life filters us through a sieve with minuscule holes where disappointments sift excruciatingly slow.

“Oh my god! I cannot believe that you are still as you were before. Always adorned with feminine apparel,” this is how Mariam initiates conversation when she meets her friend, Rahaf, whom she has not seen for nearly ten years. Rahaf’s expression alters to one of perplexity and astonishment as soon as she notices Mariam. Without warning, Mariam advances to embrace her lifetime friend. After she embraces her and asks about her and her children, she says, “Are you aware that you are cruel? I have not heard any news about you. I have tried to contact you more than once on the number I have but it is always out of service.” Rahaf responds, “I have been well. You are right. I do not deny that I have been negligent of you and stopped contacting you. However, you know what life is like with all of its duties.” Her voice is laced with insincerity, stumbling over her words. She puts her hand on her stomach attempting to conceal something.

Mariam screams, “Wow! I did not notice that you are pregnant. Excuse me, I was absorbed in reprimand that I forgot to ask about your latest news.”

“Everything has been well. I remarried and, here I am, I am pregnant with twins. My children from my former

husband spend their time between myself and him,”

“This is marvellous. I am delighted for you. Who is the lucky one, then?”

Rahaf trembles, mumbling a prayer that she is relieved from the onslaught of Mariam’s questions. Her voice quivers while she excuses herself, saying that she needs to leave now because she has a doctor’s appointment. She draws closer to Mariam, hugs her and says her goodbyes in haste. She takes fast strides, wanting to put distance between them as quick as possible. Mariam feels nebulous by Rahaf’s actions, reasoning that she must not be late to her doctor’s appointment.

Mariam suddenly remembers that she did not ask Rahaf for her phone number. She beams, “Perhaps I will meet her once more before I return from vacation.” Mariam had decided, after ten years of living abroad, to visit her hometown to spend the summer holiday with her parents.

We do not know how to adorn our souls after the desolation that plagues them in the paths of discontent. We endeavour to disguise our affliction and despondency with a wan smile.

She loses herself in her thoughts amongst others. Her thoughts swim to where she spent half her life estranged from her family, her feelings and herself. She contemplates of how her marriage failed when she asked for divorce because she could not have children. It was a torturous decision, though it was cogent. She refused to remain under any threat or fear that he may one day demand his right to be a father because he indubitably would decide then to

marry another. Rather, she preferred to withdraw quietly. Although he attempted to make her reconsider her decision, assuring her that she is enough for him, she did not dither to ask for divorce.

She travels with her thoughts to that day when she made agonizing effort to hold it together, preventing her tears from cascading while he divorced her. He left without return, concealing his fragility, yielding to her request. His desire to become a father was more potent than his love for her.

“Mariam. Mariam, why are you distracted? We are right here,” her brother’s voice brings her back to reality. Disoriented, she replies, “Nothing. I was just distraught.” She sighs sorrowfully. Her sister approaches her to embrace her, to alleviate some of her tribulation, “Come on, do not torment yourself, okay? You are here on a vacation. We will forget about the past with all of its misfortune. I have great news for you.” In a surly and disinterested manner, Mariam asks, “What is it?” Her sister responds, “Next Sunday, we are invited to my friend’s wedding and she has asked me to invite you as well. I think it is a wonderful opportunity for you to step out of your dejection and an opportunity to meet your old friends.”

“And what do my old friends have to do with your friend?”

“Because my friend is Rahaf’s sister.”

Mariam grins, “Are you serious? Oh, how I miss her!”

She tells her sister about her serendipitous encounter with Rahaf while she was shopping. Then, she asks her,

“Do you know whom she married?” Her sister replies, “I do not know anything about her husband except for that he lives abroad as well and only comes on holidays to be with her.” Mariam’s lineaments elated; she was exhilarated by her sister’s idea, as if she is proclaiming that it is time to retire from her estrangement, “I will go to your friend’s wedding with you.” Gleefully, her sister screams and embraces Mariam, “Oh, how I love you, the most beautiful sister in the world!”

It is most onerous when life places you at the starting point. You return to that laceration which you thought was healed. As soon as the ghosts of the past come into contact with it, you discover that it remains gaping after believing that it had healed.

Mariam and her sister walk into the wedding hall, somewhat tardy. After an inconsiderable search, they find a table faintly distant from where the bride and groom sit. “I will go to greet the newlyweds. Are you coming?” asks Mariam’s sister. Mariam replies, “Not now. You go and I will greet them later.”

Mariam glimpses at the attendees hoping to see any of her old friends. She is, however, unsuccessful to find any. She ponders that she may not be able to recognize them after so long. “Surely their features have changed,” she whispers to herself. Disinterested, she stands from where she is sitting to look for her sister among the congestion of the attendees. As she takes cautious steps, perturbed about colliding into someone, she glimpses Rahaf standing near someone.

Mariam walks swiftly, in delight to surprise Rahaf. She approaches Rahaf, placing her hands on Rahaf’s eye so

she can guess who it is. Rahaf turns around to find Mariam beaming at her. “I have finally found you. Now, there is no excuse not to chat for a while. You do not know how much I miss you, our conversations and our memories,” Mariam divulges. Rahaf is so overwhelmed with trepidation that her mouth does not utter one syllable. “Come on, tell me about that husband of yours. Who is he, and how did you meet him? Are you content with him? I want to know everything,” Mariam resumes.

Rahaf attempts to speak, compelling her throat to produce any sound. However, words are elusive. She looks at the person approaching from the corner of the hall, waving at her. Her vision blurs, her body shudders and her heart palpitates. He draws closer until he stands right behind Mariam. “I will not allow anyone to take you from me today. Excuse me, Miss. Will you allow me to take my wife from you?” he speaks.

Mariam twists to ensure that she is not imagining that voice which she has heard before. Rahaf trembles. He trembles. Mariam is terror-stricken, petrified in her place. She is disintegrating, as if her feet are drowning in quicksand, pulling her under.

One thousand and one questions are ringing in her head, “How did that happen? When Rahaf was the one emboldened me to get divorced?”

## Absolution

We are often at a crossroads, unable to make a decision. Because each path has its own steps, we stumble, confused and lost. You scruple to choose either what is dearest to your heart or what is most pulchritudinous to your soul. The puzzle of love becomes convoluted, tormenting like a chronic disease, a cancer of another quintessence. The feelings of love enervate us; we attempt to solve the puzzle to fail to try again. Each attempt, time gnaws at us. Our souls wither while we look for solutions and answers. The final answer is a perpetual no. Then, separation comes.

My name is Abdelkareem, a young man faintly exceeding his prime age. What appears to be the prime of my age was barren. The buds of my dream did not blossom, and the flowers of my desires did not grow. Like any other youth of our age, I met a girl through Facebook. It was casual acquaintance, unbound to friendship. As the days passed and the months swept, this acquaintance transformed into admiration then into love to the extent of insanity. We passed all of the stages of love, ardour and adoration. The months rolled into a year and a year into years with us floating in the clouds of ardour. We forgot about distance and barriers, anything that has to do with reality.

I especially disregarded that she was divorced and had children which was not a great thing for me. Even the age difference between us, where she was double my age, I managed to hold her heart and soul. None of these obstacles hindered us from advancing. Even the dream of meeting was reciprocal.

I delved into her depths until she trusted me enough to confide in me about her past and present, even her future dreams. I was an excellent listener, never a cause of chagrin to her. We quarrelled, conciliated and returned to how we were before if not more in love and passionate. Nothing disturbed us except for that state through which she occasionally went where she demanded to leave. Steadfast on her decision, she would fabricate gratuitous problems.

Initially, I had accepted that sudden change allowing her to leave until she quelled and talked to me again. I justified her actions only so the distance between us did not stretch. Her absence would last for three days, and as soon as I write to her, she would return longingly, choked on the tears of her yearning.

I adapted to that change and each time she would contrive a new excuse. I would beg her to stay. Alas, it was in vain. As time went by, I got used to her departure and return, an endless cycle. Until one time, she wanted to leave. I implored her not to do this but she refused to listen. She stood firmly with her unwonted steadfastness. She even pushed the limit, wounding me with her discourteous and malicious words. “I have grown tired of our relationship and love.” “Love is debilitating and noxious.”

I can still hear the echoes of these words. She had her way, as always. I repeatedly tried after three days but to no avail. She obstructed all of my attempts. Nevertheless, I did not capitulate. I tried over and over, sending her messages of I miss you’s and I love you’s. They overflowed all means of communication between us. I begged her to return, that I am in a dreadful state. I was stricken with illness,

dejection and resignation. I was fragile and defeated. Life was purposeless without her. Everything was painted either black or white. All of my emotions dulled. Even my family, I no longer sat with. I slunk into isolation, except for my job. I would go as if I am programmed. I avoided everyone. My solitude was an interlude of questioning. My only obsession was how I will bring her back.

How we are brilliant at pretence and deception. My only salvation was that we were still in contact every now and then. I would ask her about herself, and she would reply that she has been doing well. I did not believe her and I knew that she was not well.

How love is capable of connecting our feelings regardless of the stretch of distance. I still do not know how I would worry about her and feel if she is fine or not. However, there was not much that I could do.

How agonizing it is to be shackled by distance. I respected her desire of not wanting me to write to her. I withdrew hoping that she would return.

One day, while I was at work, she wrote me that she wanted to speak. My heart almost palpitated out of my ribcage. As soon as I read her message, I called her. I did not hear a voice, but a sob. I asked her to calm and speak to me quietly so I may understand what is going on. She attempted to stop weeping and started to speak, her voice quivering, interrupted with her cries. "Please, calm down, my love. I am here by your side. Do not worry. Just tell me what happened," I pleaded. Her voice trembled as if she had a fever, "I have cheated on you. Please, forgive me!" The words did not register in my head, not even the letters made



sense. It was as if she spoke in tongues. It was as if the word cheating had never passed through my head. Perhaps I had never read it.

I have heard stories of different kinds about cheating. However, I thought that it did not exist in the dictionaries of my head, heart and soul. I despised all cheaters. Despite everything, despite the distance, barriers and society, I had never thought of being unfaithful to her even if it was looking at another. I knew that it would enrage her. I respected her in her presence and her absence. Even when she left, even with her request to live my life, I only saw her. It was not consternation or compulsion. It was my love and adoration for her.

I think at the time I had swallowed my tongue or all words had escaped my mind. She tried to speak but her tears were volant. She mumbled, asphyxiated, "Please, forgive me." I did not ask her why she did it. My voice did not amplify. I did not even condemn her. My tears were coagulated. I was overwhelmed with fury, but her words placated me, "I need you. Do not leave me." I did not ponder. All that I felt at that moment was that I love her to the extent of absolution.

\* \* \*

## Say Amen

“Treat women kindly.”

That was the conclusion of Friday’s sermon. He said a prayer and everybody behind him repeated “Amen”. The prayer was held and in a gratifying melodious voice, he recited some wise verses. Whoever heard him was overwhelmed with abidance. Some were even teary-eyed.

They gathered around him to congratulate him on his scope of such levels of knowledge, his sublime lessons and his devotion to inviting and encouraging people to Islam. This gathering was not sans questions about matters of religion. All of them were captivated by him, docile to his sermons. All words out of his mouth were pearls of wisdom. The women were among his biggest fans.

They attempted to court him, to approach him in copious ways. There were those who asked about the ruling on praying after bleeding following the end of menstruation. Evidently, he would answer for there is no ignominy in religious matters. Others would ask whether it was considered a sin if they abstained from their husbands. The most eccentric of them were those who proposed to him.

His prayers and piety unceasing among people of other religions, they entered Islam because of him uttering the two declarations of faith in his presence. His reputation grew exponentially. They praised him. Some parents became rapacious with their desire to marry their daughters to him even if they were well aware that he was married and had children. And how could they not when our most prevalent

maxim is: “That who fears God, thou shall not fear.”

He was as immaculate as his white cloak, pious and ironed meticulously. He encountered life with his teeming beard that almost reached his sternum, pigmented with henna following the example of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). He dispensed his smiles with his suave speech, signs of grandeur and asceticism embellishing his features, alluding to his acceptance into paradise to enter it from its vastest doors. A laurel to his wife and children for having a man whose consideration is to please God and His Prophet. Talk scattered here and there. Everyone was affected by every thought that came out of him.

A boy came to him from a distance and spoke to him in front of everyone, “Sheikh, there is a woman outside of the mosque. She is asking for you and refuses to come in.” Some were intrigued and tantalized and so they followed him to probe. In the entrance of the mosque, a woman in her forties stood, insolently smoking a cigarette, and three young girls of European features. They were as beautiful as angels, their hair unveiled and clothes scantily covering their bodies. Anyone would hardly believe that they were Muslims.

When he approached them, his features altered. All of the grandeur and asceticism evanesced from his face and were replaced with stupefaction and discomposure. The people gathered around them in an attempt to comprehend the situation. He spoke to them in pseudo equanimity, “Please, leave us alone.” However, the woman refused and dauntlessly said, “I would like to ask you a question, Sheikh, in front of everyone. On the Hadith of the Prophet

(PBUH), ‘If someone has three daughters and is patient with them and clothes them from his wealth, they will be a shield against the Fire for him.’ Is this Hadith faithful or is it unverified?”

The people crowded around them, their eyes gleaming with derision at this woman and her inconsequential question to the Sheikh. They were certain that he would be able to answer her eloquently and effortlessly. However, the Sheikh lowered his head, avoiding looking at her and her indecent daughters. He tried to divert and evade her, praying God to undo the knot in his tongue and save him from the ignominious situation in which no one would desire to be.

His eyes met hers and one half of a smirk painted her lips. The most sinister sparks ignited in his eyes as if he was threatening to give her the usual punishment. He began to envision how he would return home to assail her with wonted profanities and vilifications; how she was an impetuous woman. This would not go without striking her, unleashing his fury on his daughters. He would tell them that he did not want them because they were a cause of humiliation for him and distorted his image in front of others.

Courteously, she retracts, “You seem to be occupied, Shiekh. Never mind. Perhaps you may answer my question later.” She told her daughters to say goodbye to the reverent Shiekh and ask him to pray for them.

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## Empurpled Quietude

Hesitance overwhelms us and failure puts us in a state of anxiety. Our resolve despairs in the heat of conflict between adventure and deliberation. Madness is quintessential to life. We live shackled to a faint heart that has surrendered to numbness. Frost encompasses our souls in the labyrinth of reality. We suffer in silence and mourn the shortness of time. We pretend to be well and that is everything is fine. We extract from patience anodyne to numb the wounds of the past. Our emotions simmer, rebelling when silence corrodes. They boil over the lines bleeding letters that manifest into words and sentences enveloping the paper with its scourge. Beneath the burden of a free revelation, cumbersome poems prompt rhymes, novels and stories buried in the memory niche.

“I want a child with you. No! I want you a mother to my children. I will not marry anyone but you. You are who I want to spend what remains of my life with.” She looks at him, bewildered, doubting what words she has heard, unfeeling. After all of that time, distance and wait, he has made his decision. “He wants me a wife to him, a mother to his children,” She muses, overwhelmed with exuberance. As a child, she lived as an orphan to grow up and discover that that her father remains alive.

She does not ask him if he is sure, if he is proposing because she has decided to leave. She forgets about that decision and those words, even that yearning fettered to distance which gnaws at her soul. It is as if with his decision he takes a hold of what is left of her and salvages what may

be salvaged. When she overlooks her feelings, at a time other than this, she remembers the secret that she has made strenuous effort to conceal from him, how she is sickened with a malignant disease and her days are numbered.

She feels overwhelmed with emotion when she speaks to him, in denial, the inferno of blame growing inside of her head. The storms of affliction blow at her heart. Misfortune inevitably follows her; she is demolished by anguish. Failure lurks behind her as if she was born to always fail.

She flounces from her seat, full of rage. She screams, “Why now? Why now precisely? Where were you when I begged you, humiliated myself, beseeched you to stay? I do not want anything from this world except you. Do you think that it was easy, that I did not have pride? It was not easy, trust me. You wound me, a wound that still bleeds on your empty promises. Your refusal was callous and ruinous. In spite of that, I excused you a thousand times. Your wrongdoing was forgiven in light of my love for you. I disregarded, forgot and bowed to your zeal. Now, it is too late. I will not retract my decision to leave.” He is adamant as she is, “I will not allow you to leave. I will kidnap you and forcefully marry you.”

How cruel is life. How ironic is time. The things most suitable for us come at unsuitable times. She has always wished to hear those words, even if they were lies. “I apologize, my love, but I am not the person that I used to be,” she leaves without goodbyes. The tears pour down her cheeks. The reason that she cries is elusive to her. Is she crying over the life wasted on waiting or over losing a love that is impossible to find?

Nostalgia destroys us and longing annihilates us. We wonder about the attachment which forms when we meet someone coincidentally. Scattered feelings exhaust us. We are lost in the labyrinth of illusion, detached from reality, reclined inside our vivid imaginations. We build a mirage of a home. We create children from the clay of our wishes, sprinkling our dreams hoping that they transform into reality one day.

She is cold, her teeth chattering, her limbs shivering and trembling, caused by the fever of separation. She tries to calm herself down, buried beneath the rubble of memories, listening to the echoes of his voice for it may help her endure the flames of yearning. She erases his messages without reading them. She does not want to return to the paradise she sees in his eyes. Better to smoulder than to die instantly.

We conceal our failure. We clasp the crumbs remaining from our souls with fragile hands. We try to evade time, to illude time. We run through a mirage. Perhaps we will strike luckily. If it does not work out, we ask for more time to score the victory goal. We are uneasy with a tie.

She was tied with him when she refused. She protested. She rebelled. She was comforted when he invaded her soul. An empurpled quietude. He, however, did not give up. He asked for extra time to raise his flag of victory in the battlefield of her defeat. Arrogance, obstinacy and determination to possess, his attempts continued, never yielding. He spoke to himself repeatedly, "She will come back to me. Knowing that she loves me, she will not leave me." He tried to contact her a thousand times but to no avail.

Time pricks us with its surprises. A black hole forms,

leaving behind scars mutilating our feelings and our wan souls. They remind us of the misfortune that we have caused ourselves before we disappointed those most dear to us.

“It is impossible that she has left me. I know that she is waiting for me. I know,” he tries to contact her a thousand more times to tell her that he wants her as his wife, his lover. He wants to tell her that he is confident that she will be the best mother to his children. Their children will be a copy of her and he will love them twice as much because they are his children and she is their mother. He attempts one more time to contact her.

A voice sounds from the other side, a voice that does not belong to her. “I wish to speak to her, please. Tell her that I miss her, that my life is meaningless without her. I want to apologize. I want to tell her...” He is interrupted by the voice on the other side, “It is too late. She passed away this morning. She did not cease from repeating your name until her dying breath.”

The words cease. The letters catch in his throat. A grey silence crawls in and engulfs his soul. The telephone falls from his hand and his heart drops to his feet. He has become devoid of everything. He plummets to the ground, sobbing over the loss of his heart on the platform of remorse.

\* \* \*



## Regrettably

I dedicate this short story to the parents of the dying campers at the brink of calamity.

Among the wreckage, she managed to salvage the doll that her father gifted her at the age of five when he made her a promise and broke it. She looked at it while a tear descended her face creating crenulated lines on her cheek, a smile adorning her face. She clutched it and whispered, "I will not leave you alone anymore."

At the farthest point of the demolished neighbourhood, crowds and reporters gathered. Heading the crowd was a man dressed in a black suit, either shaking his head or commenting with a few words. She remembered him well when he began to approach the wreckage of her house where her dreams were crushed underneath.

It was the man whom her father took her to vote for when she was fourteen years old. She had asked him then, "Why did you choose him and not the other candidate?" Her father's response was, "He is the closer to people. He understands their suffering. At the time of war, he apologizes for it."

Her eyes flooded with the memories, an outpouring of sadness. She remembered when he came with his crowds, expressing his apologies during her father's funeral who was killed while cheering his name and for the people to vote for him. She awoke from the downpour of her agony, his voice asking, "Is this your house?" Her eyes filled with disdain, "It was my house. Thanks in advance for your apology." She arose from her place, clutching her doll. She wandered, distracted, mumbling to her doll, "Do not worry. Everything is fine."

## Cherry Season

The memories of childhood overflow, a warning to alert her before the smothering of the memories of agony. Pictures follow pictures, sporadic, vague. Some are pallor and blurred. Others are conspicuous. Like that memory of when she was ten years old. It was the season of harvesting the summer fruits and cherry season.

I remember this because of my adoration of that fruit. My mother, as usual, would prevent me from eating it because I suffered from asthma. If I ingested one, I asphyxiate and they have to take me to the hospital. Being obstinate, I did not listen to my mother, hid somewhere isolated and ate some concealed cherries. As soon as I ate them, I suffered from a fit and my mom found out about my disobedience.

This time, I was aware enough. Being a ten year old meant that I was more conscious. Cherry season arrived and my mother's instructions, "Do not eat the cherries. You will suffer from an asthma fit. You are aware of what hurts you," dwelled in my head. My mother was steadfast; however, she did not hide the cherries. She left them out in the open, right in front of me, so the decision would be mine to make. I glanced at the cherries, dejected. I went to my father, who was sitting on the roof of our house. I took the steps, incandescent at my mother and the cherries.

After seeing my irked lineaments, my father asked, "What is wrong with you?" I answered, "Nothing." I sat at the corner, slightly further from where my dad sat, with some papers and a pen. Inadvertently, I began to write. I wrote my name and date, then a title: "I hate my mother."

It was my first secret divulged to paper, the first letters and words that I wrote while I am overwhelmed with anger. Unaware, I divulged to the paper my detestation of my mother, “I hate her so much when she worries about me and suffocates me with her caution. Ceaseless instructions, orders and prohibitions. She is not aware of the effort I have to exert not to suffer from an asthma fit, how much I deprive myself of because I am terrified of asphyxiation.”

I felt liberated and tranquil after I wrote freely. I concluded with, “I know that my mother loves me and wants to see me happy. Moreover, I know that she suffers when she cannot help me with something that hurts me. I do not hate my mother but this cherry season. It forces my mother to become strict and worrisome.” After I finished writing, I looked around me to find my father staring at me with a delightful smile and asked, “What were you writing?” My face mantled with mortification and I was perplexed. I mumbled, “Nothing of importance.” However, he insisted to find out what I was writing so I asked, “Why do you want to know?” His response was, “I was watching you while you were writing. Your features changed every few minutes as if you were writing a historical epic. I became intrigued and I want to know what that paper contains.” I implored that he would relieve me from this but that made him more steadfast. With his insistence and my trepidation of his anger, I extended my trembling hand that held the paper and stood petrified with my head cast down in indignity.

It was minutes later that the sound of my father’s laugh echoed around us. I glanced at him to comprehend the situation to find him overcome with laughter, his eyes soaked with tears. He could not retain control from laughing

that much. After a while, he was able to recover and catch his breath. He opened his arms and embraced me with all love and affection whispering, “Your mother loves you so much but she does not vocalize it. She shows it through her actions. Do not admonish her. You will grow up and comprehend what I mean.”

I grew up and the cherry season remains to leave me sleepless. That was until I decided to challenge this illness and trained myself to eat cherries without believing that I will have an asthma fit. I succeeded but the cherry season reminds me of how wondrous my mother was.

\* \* \*

## Serendipity

She opens her mailbox and retrieves some letters among few newspapers and magazines as she habitually does after she returns from the war of surviving routine. She enters her five rooms, one kitchen and two bathrooms house. The first thing that she does is get rid of her clothes as if they are a weight burdening her. She throws the mail on the table, wears her light sleeping gown that liberates her from the burden of another exhausting day.

She returns to go through these letters, glancing and sorting them from most important to least important. She begins with the most important. It was that first letter that disoriented her, made her disintegrate into the nearest chair. She read it the first time and understood its content. She read it again to ensure that she understood clearly. The third time was what made her comprehend: “We are from the lottery company. We are pleased to inform you that you have won one million dollars. We welcome you to receive your reward next Monday. It is preferable to bring your personal I.D. for identification purposes.”

She does not remember that she bought a lottery ticket. To make certain, she searches for the number on the letter and calls. A hoarse enervated voice responds. After she explains her letter, he replies, “Yes, Ma’am. The letter is correct. You have won the grandest prize.” Bewildered, she thanks him and hangs up. She attempts to collect her thoughts as if searching for an answer of an equivocal question.

She hastily stands and brings her bag, emptying its content haphazardly on the table. She searches for the

lottery ticket which she does not remember purchasing. Among the papers and scattered content, she finds one half of a creased lottery ticket. She grabs it as if it is laced with some magical power. She remembers clearly the day when she went to buy her children candy. When she paid the price of the candy, the store owner informed her that he did not have change. He had suggested that she takes a lottery ticket with the remaining money. She had taken it with reluctance. He took one half and she, the other. He requested that she fills the form with her name and address in case she had the winning ticket.

She remembers how exasperated she was and complained that the procedures took her longer than usual. She regards the paper and barely whispers, “I have really won the grandest prize.” Her teeth come into view as she grins. A laugh follows, then more hysterical laughs echo off of the walls of the house. She has won the grandest prize because there was no change.

\* \* \*

## A Grey Reality

Sorrows linger on our features, disintegrating whatever that is left from pseudo happiness. Love is worn out and emotions writhe beneath the weight of walking on twisted roads. Here lays our failure embedded with criticism. Around the corner of dreams, our emotions fleet as not to be dispelled to leave. Our souls wander the distance of time, overwhelmed by reality on the side of time.

“Beginning from today, you will not have any holidays. We have a shortage of staff and we need you to fill that shortage,” speaks the administrative alternate from behind his desk to this humble employee, Hassan, sitting on the parallel chair, listening and nodding his head in approval.

“But, Sir, I have not had any holidays for six months. I think that this has not been added under the overtime clause. I have not even had a raise.”

“Listen, Hassan. I know that you exert tremendous effort at work. However, the laboratory’s budget does not allow a raise in employees’ salary. Nonetheless, I promise that when things alleviate, you will be the first to receive a raise.”

The administrative alternate stands from his place. He excuses himself because he needs to leave and thanks Hassan for his understanding and cooperation. Hassan is dispirited as he leaves. As soon as he is outside, he commences a flood of cavils and profanities, “The laboratory’s budget does not allow. Right! I cannot tolerate them or their lies. I have spent almost ten years and the situation is as it is. Empty promises, requests and orders and eventually, you

receive nothing.” He takes tedious step, distracted. His thoughts roaming, conflicted, one question centres at the front, “What am I going to tell her this time?”

\* \* \*

“I wish to request a raise. Please, approve it. I am going through difficult conditions.”

The manager looks bewildered at Ya’quub, “Did you not request a raise about two months ago?”

“I am well aware, Sir. However, the conditions of life are exigent. The monthly salary barely covers transportation, purchasing food, water and, of course, cigarettes. With some saving, I can buy clothes twice a year.”

“All right. I will look into whether you are allowed another raise. You can go back to work.”

Ya’quub walks out, burdened, misery painting his face. He mumbles, “I hope the manager does not refuse my request for a raise. This is my last opportunity not to lose her.” He enters his office, looks around, sits at his chair and tries to return to work. His mind and thoughts, however, are somewhere else.

\* \* \*

“Sir, what happened to the request that I filed?”

The vice president rises and approaches Elias to understand what he is talking about, “What request?”

“The request for compensation over my hand that has been sawn during work,”

The vice president retreats behind his desk, expanding his



chest, “All is well. I have spoken to the president regarding this. He awards you an appreciation certificate and gives you the title of the perfect employee. I think it is ready, just needs the general manager’s signature. This way we have compensated you.” Elias stands from his place with rancour, “What about my hand that has been sawn, the material compensation I awaited to pay for a plastic hand? How am I to continue living when I am like this? Tell me, please.”

“Calm down. Sit down. This shouting is uncalled for. There is not a clause in your contract that states that you to be compensated if you are injured during work. I think what the president has given you is not inconsequential.”

Elias rises to leave, “Thank you and thank the president for me for his generosity.” He storms out of the vice president’s office overcome with rage and anguish. It is a little beyond one in the afternoon. He roams purposeless, nonplussed, speaking loudly, choking on the bile in his throat, “An appreciation certificate and perfect employee! How ludicrous of them. What am I to do with that certificate? Is it going to compensate me for my hand, or is another hand going to grow out? How I detest this unjust life. How can I propose to her when I am an amputee?”

\* \* \*

Hassan’s phone rings. He takes it out of his pocket and looks at the screen. “Oh my god, not now, Fatima! You have chosen an inappropriate time to call,” he answers, compelled, attempting to conceal his vexation, “I know the reason that you are calling, my love. You will ask whether

the manager has accepted my request for a holiday?”

“I know that he has approved it because I miss you so much.”

“My apologies, my love. I did not meet with the administrative alternate today. He did not come in to the laboratory. I have been told that he is attending an important meeting.”

“Oh my god, I cannot believe that you have not taken a holiday until now. I am drained from all of the waiting.”

“There is nothing that I can do, trust me. Do you know? I am contemplating emigrating. I have a friend who may help me with travelling. However, the method is perilous.”

“No! Do not tell me that you plan to travel by boat. Any method other than this. I will not allow you to throw yourself at death.”

“Listen well. There is no other way but this. I do not care much for anything anymore. What is the point to fear death when each day a part of me dies?”

“You have made your decision to travel. I am well aware of your stubbornness. You will go no matter how much I object.”

“I am compelled to do this, Fatima. There is no other solution. I am tired of giving up and being enslaved.”

Fatima cries, hanging up without goodbyes or any other words. Hassan contacts his friend, Amgad, tells him of his acceptance on travelling by boat and asks him about the time and place. Amgad replies, “You are in luck. Next week, a boat will embark at 1 a.m. Be ready.”

“Do not worry. I will be there before you,” Hassan says, hangs up, and his heart quiets.

\* \* \*

“May your evening engulf in roses and jasmine, most beautiful women in the world.” She replies from the other end, “It has taken you long to call. I have waited until I thought that you have forgotten about me.”

“Is it even possible to forget my life, my sun which lights my path, my moon which adorns my sky?”

“Hold on. Do not distract me with your sugar-coated words. Tell me what has happened about the raise. Did the manager accept your request?”

“Oh, I am such an ignoramus! I forgot to tell you that the manager fell ill and did not come in to work today. Do not worry, my love. I will talk to him tomorrow.”

“It is habitual of you to say ‘do not worry’, appeasing me with few words.”

“I want to tell you something but please listen to me until I am finished.”

“Go ahead. I am listening”

“I am going to emigrate. It is in my intention to travel but...”

“It is the same repetitive topic. You plan to travel by boat which you are well aware that I never have and never will approve no matter what.”

“Hayat, please, give me the change to explain. This method is guaranteed. I have a friend who knows someone

that will help me with travelling.”

“No, I do not approve. I will never approve. Do you hear me?”

She hangs up, the echo of her voice reverberating through his soul. “Forgive me, Hayat. I do not have any other solution.” He calls his friend, Ehab, to tell him that he will travel by boat, “All right, my friend. Give me ten minutes to contact my friend, Amgad, to enquire about the travelling details.”

Ya’quub’s phone rings. He eagerly replies, “Tell me that I can travel soon.” Ehab answers, “Do you know how lucky you are? There is a boat embarking next week at 1 a.m.” Ya’quub cheers, “Thank you! You are the best of friend.” Ehab tells him about the time and place and warns him about being late. “Do not worry, my friend. I will be there before 1 a.m.”

He hangs up, Hayat’s voice laced with rage ringing in his head. “Forgive me, Hayat. Time has forced me to put myself in peril. Better to die trying to reach a dream than die as a failure.”

\* \* \*

“Who am I?” Elias questions, eyes closed with the hand left to him.

“How mindless are you. I have waited long for you, drank about four cups of coffee and a glass of juice. Why are you late?” He turns around her and sits at the chair across from her, “I apologize, my love, but today has been eventful. Can you believe that the vice president did not come in today?”

They have said that his wife is bedridden.” Maria sees through his lie, allows him to think that she believes him. She paints a lackadaisical smile on, “Do not worry, love. What is important is that you are well. I do not see the need in requesting a material compensation to wear a plastic hand. I love you as you are, however you look. I have loved your heart and soul, not your appearance.”

Elias is overwhelmed with emotion. He draws closer to her, holds her hand and imprints his love and admiration for her through a kiss.

“Maria, there is something that I wish to speak with you about.”

“Go ahead, love. Speak. I am listening.”

“Do you remember your friend Hanaa, Amgad’s wife, whom you told me works at sea and helps people travel?”

“Yes, I remember. What is with her?”

“Nothing, my love. I was thinking that you can talk to her to ask her husband if he may help me with travelling. This way I can heal abroad and perhaps get an electronic hand to compensate the one that I lost.”

“Are you joking? Do you want to travel by boat? Do you know the hazards, accidents and drowning that happens to people who travel that way? I think you have become unstable if you think like that.”

“Why not? It is the easiest. You do not know how much I suffer, how much I loathe how people look at me with commiseration. I just want to have an alternative hand. It does not matter if it is plastic or electronic. It does not

matter. Just an alternative will satiate me.”

She looks at him, her heart congested with emotion. One half of her agrees. The other half refuses. The words excoriate her throat, she whispers, “I will not agree to your idea of travelling by boat. I will not call my friend but I can give you her number. You can talk to her and ask her if her husband still works at sea and helps people travel.” She grabs a paper and a pen, writes her friend’s, Hanaa, number, rises up from her seat to conceal the tears flowing down her cheeks and darts away without looking back for goodbyes.

Elias remains, frozen in place. He does not attempt to follow her. He exhales heavily and glances at the paper to find a number and the words “I love you”. His tears brim over and fall on his cheeks. Crying over his vulnerability, he picks up the paper and presses the numbers. Hanaa’s voice resounds, “Who is it?”

“Excuse me, Mrs.” Elias responds, “Are you Hanaa, Amgad’s wife?”

“Yes, this is she. Who are you?”

“I am Elias, Maria’s fiancé.”

“Oh, I remember you. Excuse me, why did you call?”

“Excuse me, Mrs. I wish to speak to your husband regarding something. May you give me his number?”

“My husband is home. Do you wish to speak to him right or take his number and speak later?”

“I prefer to speak to him now.”

“Hold on.”

Amgad responds from the other side after his wife explains who the caller is. “Go ahead, Mr. Elias. With what can I help?”

“My fiancée found out from your wife that you work at sea and help those who wish to travel abroad.”

“Yes, that is true,” Amgad affirms.

“If you may, I wish to emigrate. I am ready. You need only to tell me the time and place and I hope it can be soon.”

“You are in luck, Mrs. Elias,” Amgad responds, “There is a boat embarking next week at 1 a.m.”

Elias is elated, “That is what I hoped for. I will be there before 1 a.m.” He hangs up and returns to the paper between his hands. He reads those three words over and over. His exhale is ablaze with sorrow, mumbling, “Maria, my love. The callousness of life is what forced me to leave. Perhaps I will return to you once more. Perhaps I will not.”

In the midst of life where choices are as bitter as bile, where the circumstances force us to deracinate, we cross paths that our feet never dreamed to step in. Our dreams cease before they become, vanishing beneath the rubble of a vague reality. On the shore of wishes, their corpses are strewn. The weeping gulls soar above them. The sea dissipates enormous waves, reciting free verse elegies sent by three flowers at sunset every day. They hope for the return of their souls at the waiting docks.

\* \* \*

## **A dream and a wish**

How beautiful it is to have a dream. How it is more beautiful to exert effort to achieve that dream. In this life, we all have dreams and wishes but we shelve them then ignore them. We reason that fate did not allow us a chance to achieve them. We procrastinate. We dawdle. We complain. Eventually, we reluctantly throw those wishes and dreams in the bin.

She is dispirited from being an ordinary woman, tedious from the monotony of routine. An excruciating boredom roams her head. A stale silence surrounds her. There is nothing here but a void that crumbles her feelings, numbs her emotions.

What then?

She wastes her time by taking care of her children, her responsibilities, house chores. At the bottom of her heart, she is aware that she is indubitably an excellent mother and house wife. Nevertheless, this knowledge does not satiate her. It leaves her dissatisfied like something is missing. Perhaps at the bottom of her heart, she knows what she wants.

These wishes and dreams remain concealed in a miniscule drawer inside the memory closet crammed with the clutter of the past. She does not know if they are still the same or if neglect gnawed at them. She goes through the memory closet, looking for that drawer. She opens it. It squeaks. She blows the dust and extracts those wishes and dreams cautiously. They produce a noise that disturbs her



debilitated emotions. The wishes and dreams jump into her soul disseminating movement to all of her senses. Signs of pleasure and happiness are evident on her face. She speaks, joyfully, “Why not? I can do it. I cannot give up more.”

She begins to design a plan to achieve as many wishes and dreams as possible. She divides them into lists of importance, availability, difficulty and possibility. Unintentionally, she screams, “Oh, how simple are my dreams. How beautiful are my wishes. Oh, how foolish have I been. How did I overlook them all of these years? With a little determination and a lot of will, I will unquestionably achieve them. A thousand mile road begins with a step. Today will be my first step.”

She goes to the kitchen and begins to make those flavoursome pastries that those who tasted it agreed on its quality and deliciousness, starting from her children and her friends. Enthusiasm thrums through her soul. Nothing occupies her mind except for making those pastries. She pours all of her feelings into every step. She adds ingredients of her wishes, dreams, her delirium. This way she infects anyone who eats them with the illness of dream achieving.

She pampers them as if they comprehend. She speaks loudly, “Now, it is time to place you inside of the oven.” She brings them out after they bake. Her children crowd in the kitchen when the aroma titillates their noses. They try to steal some but she prohibits them because the pastries are scalding. Their impatience is palpable; they steal what they can behind her.

She bakes and bakes and bakes more of these pastries, enough to feed an entire army of children. Her children notice the mountain of pastries and detect the conspicuous

enthusiasm of their mother, “What is going on?” She beams with euphoria, “Remember when I spoke to you about those wishes and dreams, how I wished to be the owner of the biggest bakery, own a branch in every city and people would rush to buy them? I have decided to move forth with this dream today. How am I to own that store when I did not let others taste them. Tomorrow, I will go to every bakery and offer them my pastries. This will be my first step.”

It seems auspicious when her children express their enjoyment of the idea, relishing that everyone will surely like these delectable pastries. She begins to pack these pastries in small transparent containers, humming the song she wrote for her children: “Be happy! Always be happy! Laugh, sing and draw a rainbow. Persevere and endure. Hold on to your dreams. Dance gleefully.” Suddenly, she remembers her other dream where she wanted to become a children’s lyricist, “Why not try to achieve this dream as well?”

She remembers the story that her father told her about a young boy who saw his father’s box full of gold pounds. He asked his father how he could have a lot of money and his father told him that money pulls more money. The boy became excited at the idea and began saving his allowance until he saved enough to buy a gold pound. He pierced the pound and tied a robe to it. He lowered it down the box’s opening to pull the other gold pounds. The robe broke and his gold pound fell into the box. The boy raced to his father, full of distress, and told him what happened, that his father lied to him about money pulling money. His father laughed, “I did not lie to you, my son. Money does pull money. Since my gold pounds in the box are more than yours, they pulled it.”

She whispers to herself, “Money does pull money and a dream pulls a dream.” She smiles and a bit of gratification sneaks into her soul. She continues to pack her delicious pastries and resumes humming, “Be happy! Always be happy! Laugh, sing and draw a rainbow. Persevere and endure. Hold on to your dreams. Dance gleefully.”

\* \* \*

## The Graveyards of Memories

Look, dear, what is happening to me now is something different. It is unlike anything else that has happened before.

It knocks.

It bangs.

It demolishes.

It lacerates with the hammers of memories.

Imagine if somebody's corpse came out of my memories, decaying, pungent with the smell that I always detested.

The smell of fear.

Yes, dear, fear has a smell.

Oh, how I did not notice the prevalent stench of fear attached to me. Its source, my memory.

Oh my god! I cannot believe that this period of time remains buried in my graveyard of memories.

I was startled like someone had pushed me off of the edge.

I have been falling ever since.

Do you believe that I do not care for this distance between me and the bottom? I just want to settle.

I know that I have been falling since ever  
before creation

before God sat on his throne.

Imagine that distance. I think it is all right.

Therefore, I can imagine the bottom. Surely it will be aculeate like an unmounted mountain.

Perhaps it will be solid ground.

Surely I will collide and fulminate like a nuclear bomb.

I do not care about that. What matters to me is the fall.

I do not think that you know, dear, the magnitude of suffering

to hang in between

not clinging to something to return

not standing to catch your breath

to fall endlessly

to no avail. It is exhausting.

You have to gasp and gasp to lose all of your senses.

Never mind, dear. Do not mind my prattle.

It is anything but consequential.

Excuse me, I have forgotten to ask how you were today.

How foolish of me

as if today is any different from yesterday.

I should have asked how you were yesterday. I do not think it would have been any different. They are all the same.

Yesterday.

The day before yesterday.

Should I ask how you were on the day you were born and

how you will be on the day you die?

Surely you do not know. In any case, you were forced.

Forced to be born and forced to die.

Just like how you are forced to live your life as it is.

No comment.

Since the beginning of time, we have been forced, even our names, which we have a large share of. We should have chosen our names.

Do you imagine the magnitude of suffering those with dreadful names go through?

To have a name like Saber or Hasanein, I believe that the latter alludes to the nature of the person who discovered it: cross-eyed.

What makes me laugh the most is my imagining having a name like those gullible ones, like Watfa, or having the name of one of my grandmothers. Just imagining that makes my skin erupt with goose bumps.

Did you know, dear, that even their choice to name us is an act of selfishness by our grandparents?

Be damned. They clone themselves as if they are begging for immortality, their names inherited, even their customs and traditions. You cannot abstain from them.

All be damned! Inheriting them as sacred.

Do not fidget, my dear. Do not be bored when the night is still young.

To be honest, I have become bored, a purposeless

meaningless tedium. All of these intriguing details  
and the songs from the east planet of everything.

Do you believe, my dear, that even my cigarettes and cup  
of coffee have bored me to death?

Do not swim away with your thoughts, my dear.

I was never bored of you.

It is just

the hammers of the past exhumed the graveyard of my  
memories

and made a black hole.

Many decaying corpses still come out of it

some smelling of condemnation and desolation.

\* \* \*

## **Better a Man's Shadow than that of a Wall**

Proverbs control us. It overpowers words and actions, and we repeat them to our children after we have memorized them by heart.

The profanities did not stop her, not even when he criticized the way she spoke. His constant censure at her cooking, that God has not created a woman except his mother who mastered the art of culinary and housekeeping. None of that made any of her knuckles flinch. It was as if all of the accidie in the world resided within her. She remains motionless, receiving sans need, sans desire, sans an inhale. Her eyes are either closed or fixated on the ceiling. She does not know how she sees her life painted there. She follows these paintings, separating them from the subject so she becomes an object, coerced.

She neglects the state, the shiver, the thrill, the interaction, the response, the trance, that jerk before the beginning, perhaps even before the acceptance.

She wanders, curiously following the paintings. They accelerate like a video tape on forward. She clings to some paintings, trying to hold on to them. They tear. She throws them underneath the subject once more. She awaits, repulsed, to find herself occupied with other faraway things unmeasured by time or distance. Perhaps they are measured by other means, like despair and despondency. She attempts to gather pieces of her, her exhales dejected. She is occupied from the main event, how the owner of the house threatened them to throw their furniture out in the street if the overdue rent is not paid, when he said, "You only have one week," how in two days



the children's school instalments needed to be paid or they get expelled, thinking of what to cook for them the next day or whether it will be sunny enough to do the accumulated laundry. She complained and cursed at the laundry. She did not know if after tomorrow will come after a century or an entire lifetime. It will remain the same.

Every time she asks, he responds, "May God eases it. I am going to the bedroom. Put the children to sleep and follow me." Her body weighs with languor, she awakens from her distraction on his usual profanities, "You are apathetic. It is as if I am married to a piece of wood." He yells, screams, roars, sweats, pants, turns on his back and turns his back to her. She will not awake to a good day if he wishes her so because nothing around her is good. It will not be a good day if she awakes to him.

She detaches from herself, acclimates to the point of absurdity and repugnance. She looks to his side, hears his snoring, a cacophonous symphony. She occupies herself with those grander and more important thoughts, how she will bear the burden of the subject and time on her body that is molten between the molars of "Sorry. Be patient" and "Better a man's shadow than that of a wall".

\* \* \*

## Tattoo

What is between the past and the present is but a heartbeat. We live on the crumbs of memories and fabricate memories of the present to become a past. Life does not hurt us and neither is time responsible of what has happened to us. It is the situations and the events inscribed on our skin, like letters and words and we are the pages and lines. Our folds are margins and footnotes where the effluvium of the past lurks in. We cannot tear any page or erase any letter. We bleed in silence, in fear, every time life draws more sorrows.

The tree branches tremble, filling up the silence and quietude. The city of death, everything within it is named silent and melancholic. A life vacant of living. Every day, she wonders how she endured living for that long in that city. “Where did I spend my life? Is it possible that I was in a coma or amnesiac? I do not remember anything,” she speaks to herself in silence. Not a word comes out of her mouth, always distracted, scowling, wan, overwhelmed by a feeling that she cannot identify.

The words splutter, a flood of recrimination and remorse. The silence suffocates her. “Am I going crazy?” she whispers, her voice stifled, the letters barely coming out. From the depths of her muted throat, the letters are spasmodic. She speaks to herself loudly but she can barely comprehend as if she has acquired a new language or an alphabet different from that which she learned. This language transforms into screams, profanities and curses directed at herself every time she remembers her age and how many years have passed while she did not do anything but be a mother. She

did not achieve her wishes, not even a part of them. The regret eats and gnaws at her. The agony grinds her between the teeth of vacillation.

She liked her new language and mastered it. An abundance of irregular words and sentences. She speaks to herself every day loudly, collecting from the past, present and future like a puzzle collecting its pieces to figure out some secret. She exerts tremendous effort to remember the past and how she used to be like. However, her memory evades her, wan pictures like a novel that she read thousands of years ago and forgot its title. Some lines lingered in her mind, remembering her childhood and how she was troublesome. The memory reminds her of the days when she grew up and became an adult.

This is an event that she will never forget. She was inflicted with panic and fear when she saw a few pink-coloured drops of blood in her knickers. She had thought that she was at risk and completely forgotten that nature will take its course. She told her mother that she has become a teenager. She does not know the reason that she worried and was cautious. Like any other girl, she had regular menstruation. However, she was not like any other girl. Each month, she suffered through agonizing pain and remained bedridden for an entire week. She smiles, remembering how she execrated the day she was born and how she wished to have been born a boy or a bird, or anything other than a girl. She felt disgusted when she changed those pads. She would compulsively wash her hands and feel dirty the entire period. The pictures follow each other. She either laughs or quietens to be embraced with silence once more.

Life writes with a noxious ink, with a needle-like pen. It does not write on our skin. It tattoos us with those memories, embedding in our bodies to grow with us.

She returns and mutters quietly, “I will not regret what has been done. I have to rise. I am strong.” Her voice reverberates to ensure what she is saying, “Yes, I am strong, impregnable. I know that. I must not surrender to despair. I will start from zero.” She smiles, her lineaments painted in equanimity. She whispers, her voice hoarse, “Failure does not equate cease of opportunity. I am confident that failure is the beginning of success. There is not a place of impossibility in my dictionary. I do not want to know why any event happened.” Her thoughts elevate her and she remembers that distant wish in the depths of her lifetime. Unintentionally, she screams, “I will achieve it even if after a while.” The hazel in her eyes gleams, a sigh leaves her chest to declare that there is no impossibility in life.

We are the creators of our memories and we are the ones who allow themselves to be defeated. My two favourite sayings are: “No one can climb your back when you are standing,” and “Better late than never.”

She goes into her room, sanguine about her plan, content as if she is trying to amend with herself and exorcise the ghosts of the past from her wan memory. She goes to sleep muttering, “I am the one who shall write this time. I will not let time tattoo me with its agonizing needles.”

\* \* \*

## A good reason

Responsibilities load us with too worries to carry; we try to do our best to control our lives. We resist, endure and keep enduring until we get tired, and we are shocked by the painful truth that we are not the victims.

We are the ones who have helped society to mock us. The bitter things will pass, but not every time it will be better, at the end it will be more and more bitter.

- Why did you kill your husband???

She was looking at the lawyer absentminded with a half-smile on her lips

The lawyer repeated his question in another form

- What made you kill your husband??

As if the question this time provoked the hate inside her soul.

- I killed my husband I admit it, and I am aware of everything I did, briefly because he is an idiot.

Imagine that he forgot to bring the tomato sauce that I asked him to bring with him!!!

- Is this a good reason to kill him with all this cruelty?

I want a convincing reason. The criminal investigation indicates that you stabbed him thirty-four times.

I do not see from what you said any convincing reason to kill him this way.

She smiles in a cunning looking at the lawyer

She responded with a whisper as if she spoke to herself

- For me it seems not only a convincing reason but a good reason.

- I'll ask you again and if you do not answer with a strong reason that will help me to defend you, you will be hanged to death.

She answered him with a cold way.

- It does not matter sir whether you are convinced or not. The most important reason is that I am satisfied of what I did.

She whispers with a confused voice

- I want water, please.

The lawyer called on the guard and asked him to bring a glass of water to the lady.

She drank the glass of water bit by bit as if she wants to sooth the flames of her raging hate that full her soul

- Why don't you help me??

Just speak honestly, tell me the whole truth.

- Sir, I have nothing to add to my confession. Let them hang me I am satisfied.

The guard entered to announce that the time of the visit is over.

The lawyer got up and collected his papers. He was wondering how she was that calm!

The guard handcuffed her and grabbed her arm to return her to her solitary cell in which she will to be hanged in a month.

She entered the cell and sit in the corner of the silent

place, while April sun enter from the window bars painted on the ground horizontal black shades.

She looked around the place with her head on the wall, she closed her eyes.

She got up and started writing and narrated on the papers which she asked for when she knew that she will be hanged, she started writing everything that comes to her mind.

Today I met with the court-appointed lawyer to defend me and began with a flood of questions and inquiries.

I think he is a junior lawyer who looks like a young man who wants to prove himself

I do not deny that I pity him I wanted to tell him everything Yes everything...

Since my childhood I have been doing what I had been told, and I was a girl who is extremely obedient. I said yes to every request I did not argue or object. I was raised this way or maybe I was very peaceful...Even when my little brother came and changed the TV Chanel, in which I followed my favorite cartoons to continue his favorite program, I complained to my mother, she said to me «go and help your big sister you are no longer young to watch cartoons» I used to go!!! I had to obey I did not have any other alternative.

I grew up and became young lady. I was peaceful and calm. I was wise and accepted my society habits and gave up the love of my life to marry my cousin, whom I was engaged to since my childhood. I moved from obedience to blind obedience, the wife must obey her husband without any sort of objection.

«The woman is like a carpet from time to time she needs to be hit» said the proverb. My Mr. Husband did his duty to hit me very well from time to time without any reason. I was deaf and dumb Prohibited from complaining. Endurance and patience was my constitution that I should follow. I didn't complain when he hit me and broke my arm and swelled my face. I didn't complain to anyone I told the doctor that I fall down from the ladder and broke my arm.

I prayed to God when I aborted my child because of him, when he kicked me on my stomach and caused me internal bleeding that led to the explosion of the womb and deprived me of motherhood forever. I did not object to the decision of his family when they wanted to marry him to his cousin, and became the mother of his boys and girls. I bowed to all circumstances and became a servant to him, his wife and children

I endured all the misfortunes and swallowed all the aches and ignored his abandonment to me and forgetting his hurtful words and insults, and even forgetting my birthdays, but that day I did not bear that neglect to forget the tomato sauce that I recommended I think it is big deal.

I did not regret killing him at all, and will never regret it, because it was the only thing I did for myself in my whole life because I wanted to. I did it

Poor so the lawyer never wondered why I stabbed him thirty four times

Yes, I meant it, all these stabbings means a year of my life, today is my ౪౪th birthday

I can now celebrate my birthday

I am very happy.....



## **Her name was Farah**

He pursued his dreams and hopes and his dreams overwhelmingly chasing him. He was absent minded with distracted soul. He was never a pessimistic and frustrated or surrender. He was full of hope. He said to «himself I will overcome all obstacles and I am confident that I know it is just a stage, I will not be defeated I will continue and wait for the sky to rain joy». He turned both sides, closed his eyes, and illumined himself that he is asleep so he may stop thinking.

He raised up and sat on that couch smoking a cigarette with no appetite, looking around his room with disgust look he said «How I wished to own a room with all means of comfort and luxury, a large room furnished as I pleased and not as the circumstances pleased, with this comfortable bed that is covered by mattress and a blue and gray cover. On the walls I can hang pictures of the celebrities and some boxing players. I want to furnish that room by putting in one corner a small table hanging above it a modern TV screen occupies half of the wall, and at the other angle there is a table on it there is a laptop and a printer. On the other angle of the room t will be for my clothes, shoes and special things, surrounded by mirrors from all sides.

Next to this room is a bathroom with a large tub and a washbasin above a small closet containing toiletries, below it was a glass shelf with his expensive perfumes, and some silver accessories. Again, his eyes fall on those pale orange curtains, shaking his head as if to make sure that he did not forget the windows of the room and how to decorate them

with those black and white silk curtains and gray transparent curtains above them.

The imagination details were like a green dress adorned with flowers. He was sitting and dreaming and wishing, he muttered with words stuck in his throat. Cold and lazy he raised up the sofa. He threw his body on the bed but he heard a creak reminded him of how old the wood of the bed is, as if it complained about the weight in pain, returned to the fluctuations of insomnia he put the pillow on his head so he can calm the flames of his thoughts. He closed his eyes, forcing himself to sleep, but thoughts are still plotting inside his mind. He mumbled and murmured «What would happen if my wishes were fulfilled»?

All I wished is to be like other human beings and I thought that pursuing those dreams and wishes will not harm anyone; they are just wishes and dreams which are ordinary and realistic, to have a wife and children and a big house. He remained on that state approximately twenty minutes, talking to himself and could not sleep. He said to himself «I will get up again maybe a cup of hot tea with some herbs benefit me and the insomnia will go» But he tried to overlook his idea.

Come on wake up your lazy, I brought you a cup of tea. Raising from his bed as a lightning hit him, she was sitting on a large, sofa, pouring tea, moving sugar cubes and smiling. He opens his eyes dazed and shocked, he rubbed his eyes to make sure that she saw a reality. He opened his eyes and look around the room, everything is furnished just like his imagination, except for that sofa. She told him «What's wrong with you today»? She got up from where

she was, and touched his face with her fingers trying to give him some of her tenderness. «The tea will be cool» she said.

He raised his head and looked at her with unbelieved eyes tried to speak he moved his lips, what happened? Who are you and where am I? As he waited the answer, he heard the voices of two children fighting in another room. He moved her quietly in front of him; he got up quickly towards the door of the room.

He opened the door to find a long corridor on both sides there are three rooms, he went to investigate the sound source. He entered that room where the sound of the children coming from. They were two children almost five years old they were twins with the same features as him when he was a child. The two children jog as soon as they saw him and said «Daddy. Daddy.

He did not understand and shocked, and the shock muted him. He embraced them coldly and left them. He entered every room, he discovered that it is the same house designed and furnished by his imagination, everything was as he dreamed and wished, even that woman in the room he was dreaming of a woman look like her with the same smile. Even the children he wished to have twins, his mind was frozen and he didn't know how that happened. He returned to that room and found her still there waiting for him. «Don't worry, my dear, children always fight» she said.

«Come and sit down to drink a cup of tea, which I think has become cold»; he sat by her side and hug her. Only moments they heard a loud explosion, that sound shake the house as if an earthquake struck it. Both of them rushed to

reassure on their children. They found their children bodies torn apart. His forces collapsed and sat next to his children crying silently. He whispered Wishes are incompatible with war.

He remember that his room was not damaged, he rushed where his bed and tears wet his cheeks, he collapsed with all his aches on the bed, and muttered another wish, his eyes remained closed, He heard the sound of feet coming, he ignored the sound and continued to close his eyes as if he were afraid of a monster. These steps sound came over his head and felt fingers caress his face and turned these caresses into arms carrying him to settle in a warm lap. He heard a voice he believed to be the same as that voice of a woman who speculated she was his wife, who he did not know what her name was. She said «What a lazy kid, come on, my little angel come, it is time to breastfeed» He opens his eyes to see the same features of that face full of tenderness and love, he smiled, and this smile increased to turn into laughs, full of reassurance.

\* \* \*

## Me and the cigarette

The winds of worries shake him down, as a boat swept away by high waves at sea. He took the bus for business as usual, paid the driver a smile, his smile was his strange thing, even in the darkest circumstances he always optimistic and satisfied

He sat in a seat close to the window and took out the rest of the money with him (one and a half dinars) and sighed in his secret, it is enough money to take me back from work. He took out a pack of cigarettes and he took out a cigarette to smoke, and as he took it he noticed that there was no cigarette enough for tomorrow and his money did not allow him to buy a new pack of cigarettes.

He turned to the window to distract himself and occupy his thinking of something other than his worries and problems that do not end, but what was outside the window of the bus is not something glorious or not surprising.

He took the pack of cigarettes again out of his pocket, and took out his cigarette, but stopped when he heard the cigarette spoke «what a fool you are, you took me out and put me back, tell me do you want to smoke me or not, you decided that you will not smoke for some time to save the remaining cigarettes with you for tomorrow, what made you change your mind. He stared at the cigarette unbelieving his eyes and ears of what is happening. Cigarette can speak.

He shook his head, perhaps he fell asleep or he was delirious. He looked at the rest of the passenger to make sure no one look at him, and said to her «do you know what

I think??!! I think about quitting smoking for good, I was not a smoker, and my addiction to smoking only from a year and a half. What led me to smoke? I don't know. I was distracted and lost as if I were someone else and committed some follies»

And out of the depths of his chest sighed despair and frustration and completed his speech

I always feel that I am someone else and that I belong to another world, or I have to be a great person, like being a king, a leader, an inventor, maybe a famous actor. I don't know why I feel so different. Since my childhood I have been dreaming and hoping to achieve myself and make my future as I want.

When I grew up a little and understood the obstacles, the disappointments, and the difficult situations of life that shaken me. I realized then that dreams and wishes are impossible. I am in a country of frustration and defeat, the country of bribery and, robbery, persecution and humiliation, in the land of everyone singing his own song, in the country of lords and slaves.

In countries I have no right to object on my monthly. Salary, I have no right to be promoted because there is another man who is supported by one of the important people will be promoted not me. No right, no right, no right. How will I achieve my dreams and wishes? While my father is seeking and working hard just to secure food on the table.

He was speaking as if he were addressing human beings, forgetting that he was talking to cigarettes, he was talking to them with eyes full of grief, «my dreams and wishes were

lost and buried in the graveyard of oblivion». He said this with all sorrow and despair. Cigarettes answered «don't be despaired may be one day your dreams will come true». But what's the point that you quit smoking, you will become more frustrated and desperate.

He replied sarcastically: As if smoking made me happier now, you idiot I got chronic diseases of cough and shortness of breath and sore throat and other diseases and increased expenses.

She said mocking him: But you cannot quit smoking.

But I can easily will you defy me!!.

You won't be able to.

He replied angrily and shouted, I can do that, and I will start with you and take it between his hands in anger and madness and smashed it and said death to you!

Tobacco scattered in his hands and the cigarette turned into pieces, he look around and sparks flying from his eyes, all the passengers looked at him wondering. He took a deep breath and he said to them in a confident tone, do not be afraid everything is fine. I was rehearsing my role in a play (Me and the cigarette) and smiled to them. He impressed them by acting as if it is a true situation so they greeted him. He tuned his face and took out his cigarette pack again, and got another cigarette, lit it, puffed out its smoke and muttered, laughing. You have the right; damned cigarette I will never be able to quit smoking.

\* \* \*

## Eternal slumber

We remorse and regret, memories are killing us and leave us heartbroken; we are surprised and try to explain and conclude. The sounds of memories are the deep sorrow that tormented us. What would have happened if we had seized those opportunities and responded to them, and tried to get rid of this despair. We fear adventure and bury our heads in dust like ostrich just like idiots.

His voice comes from the entrance of the house; her name varies every time, sometimes my lover or any other nickname he chooses. She did not answer him and let him speculate where she could be, in the kitchen making food, in the living room helping the children in watching their favorite cartoons, or she may be washing their clothes. He used to surprise her but she never liked his jokes. She was always exhausted, having anxiety that mixed with absentminded.

She tries to force herself to cope with everything, but she soon returns to that state, as if her soul is drying. She is coming down with questions, what did I do in my life so this happen to me?! How will I accept it? It is difficult no one understands me. My son is autistic. He will not be like the rest of the children.

It is tragic that your eldest son to be an abnormal, all the joy of your heart is gone. His voice brings her back to reality where they sit together watching TV What is wrong with you love?! A few words come out of her throat with difficulty and said to him nothing don't worry I'm fine. She gave him a smile to reassure him. He approached her and



surrounded her with his arms, and told her that everything will be fine.

Just be patient

He approaches more and more trying to touch her lips whispering that he misses her, she moved his arms away from her with lack of interest and said «I'm tired today I want to sleep». She goes to the bedroom and throws her body over the bed. As soon as she puts her head on the pillow, her thoughts and questions come to her. She is always exhausted to the point of fatigue and eventually falls asleep after a long struggle with insomnia.

He follows her after he finishes watching the film that she did not care to complete with him, He sleeps beside her quietly hugs her trying again and said to her I miss you.

He tries to wake her up. She woke up and drowsiness still in her eyes, and said to him in anger» ooh, Let me sleep I am very tired, Let longing for tomorrow I'll be better. «He tried to sleep but in vain, insomnia that was mixed with loss and deprivation did not let him sleep. He mumbled and cursed, «Every day like this, let longing for tomorrow. What do you think me a stone do not feel I have no sensations. He suddenly gets up and goes to the living and turned on the TV and changed the channels. He remains like this until he gets drowsy and sleeps on that state.

She woke up a little late She went to the bathroom to wash her face Surprising how her children did not come to wake he. Smell of coffee came from the kitchen. She found everything tidy and clean, there are no dishes to wash. She looked at the dining table amazed by the view

of the breakfast that was prepared carefully of the food she liked. She said good morning, the children ran to her lap with all affection she hugged them. She sat on the nearest chair. He said to her 'the most beautiful cup of coffee for my beloved' She took the cup of coffee with stunning on her facial features. He said «I prepared breakfast for the kids. Today is only for us, you and me.»

He carried his little girl, and called on his other children and said «Come on, kids, into the playroom. As he went to the room, he winked and smile to her. He returned after a few minutes tried to spread the joy of happiness at home. He told her that today is my vacation, I am yours today. We'll go shopping and then we will go to the restaurant you love, and then I have a small surprise for you.

She smiled but without any comment, and drank the rest of the coffee. He sat on a chair opposite to her and began to eat his breakfast silently tired.

We plant thorn buds in our paths that is why we gain pain and soreness, it is what we already planted. The thorn tree kept growing and growing and branching on our roads and on our bodies. Later we are forced to walk on it and it destroys our souls.

He sat on the sofa completely tired and said «It was a long and enjoyable day» She was sitting on the other end and some of the fatigue appeared on her. He completed his words and said «I stayed with you it was a long and tiring day» She was as if an evil spirit hunted her and refused to go out, she was silent and still. He looked at her trying to inquire. He said to himself «she did not ask about the surprise she seems to have forgotten is OK» he went

where he hides his surprise, and comes back cheerfully and happily. He told her to close her eyes. She closes her eyes coldly. He said «open your eyes», and gave her a box. She opened it without eagerness and without anticipation. It was the latest and best mobile phone. He never saw the brightness of joy in her eyes. She put it on the table and said thank you.

He ignored everything and justified her behavior creating excuses. He did not want to lose her. He sat next to her and began that longing mission. She left his arms and walked away. She said to him «Forgive me today I am very tired too» While she speaks and apologizes, he stands up angry and shout, what is wrong with you? Why you do this to me, all that neglect, and rejection?!

What do you want me to do more than I did? I tried hard to stand by you. He is my son too, do you think that I do not care; I die a hundred times every day because he did not speak to me like the rest of the children. But what is good if I get depressed or surrendered I will gain nothing but agony and fatigue. So I accepted my destiny.

Look at yourself you do not look like a women! Look at your hair look at your clothes!

I cannot bear it any more being tried again and again, I kept telling you that I am a man and I have desires I warned you more than once that I will see another women.

What did you do? Nothing.

She looked at him with pity, and blames herself a little for this state.

She got up and told him I'm tired I want to sleep goodnight.

She went to sleep where her insomnia awaits her.

She did not care about the revolution of anger that he faced. She did not care about the consequences. All her concern is her sick son and how he broke all her hopes and made her prisoner sick. Her fear of having children again may be repeated.

Nobody understands me or knows how I feel. Demons of despair hunted us.

We are surrounded by Fear Fear Fear. It always pursues us like our genes. We did not break this circle, we justify everything. We blame, blame and blame

We blame fate, life, time, distances, and conditions. They are just justifications to continue our illusion. We don't know the value of things until they are lost. That day he came unusually early and entered the house. She heard the sound of the door, she waited for him to call her as usual but he didn't, she was a little surprised and waited for a few minutes without hearing any sound. She thought that one of her children opened the door and went out and went to make sure. She found him sitting there. She looked at him inquiring and with a trembling voice as if she felt danger asked him.

Why did you return early today it is not your habit?? He couldn't look at her.

He hesitated a lot before he opened his mouth and said to her with grief I got married today I married another woman.

Forgive me I can no longer bear your neglect to me.

She looked at him with a shock and tearful eyes and could not say a word. She as if she is like a feather in the wind.

## **She was possessed by a jinni**

We always respect the glories of the past. We are proud of the ancestral stories of our grandmothers. We fascinated superstition over reality stories, inherited the art of narration and love to listen to horror with curiosity, waiting for the end impressed by the huge amount of excitement and thrill. Stories like Mother of Ghoul, Bogy man, Poor Hassan and the Sultan's daughter and little red riding hood.

She said to him «You have to think again the girl is still young». Her words were by some hesitation and confusion, He said to her. «End of discussion I agreed». The mother is confused this is injustice and domination. The girl did not exceed fifteen yet he wants to marry her she was widow that has four children.

What is her fault to bear all this torment and misery Poor you, my daughter, Tears descend on her cheeks. Overloaded with worries. The girl is married to a man who parallels her father's age. Inevitably she will live with her husband's family, sisters, brothers and children. Submission by submission is followed by surrender followed by fatal acclimation. She was like a servant.

She did not complain about the mistreatment of her husband's family and children except for her mother. Do not you, my daughter bear this normal thing your patience?

She was a rainy cloudy day when she woke up midnight screaming and frightened. Her husband wakes up with fear. The husband returns to complete his sleep angry at his wife's crazy behavior. The next morning she was awake doing her tasks as she used to intervene on her husband's mother's coffee sitting next to her.

She smiles and laughs as naive. The mother of her

husband is surprised and told her why you laugh like crazy. She looks at her quietly and laughs. Her husband is not looking at her. He thought she had gone to the bathroom. He tried to sleep again but could not. He got up from his shuffled bed inquiring where his wife was. She was sitting in the quiet courtyard of the house as a quiet lake, caressed by spring breeze Sometimes smiles and sometimes laughs. Approached. Why do you sit here and laughing like crazy. She raised her head and looked at him. Quietly as the quiet of the dead. The husband was furious at how he ignored him. Come on national enough insanity and absurdity. He could not drag her easily. He bent over and grabbed her by her arms firmly and began to curse

She screamed «Leave me leave me beyond your hands from me Ola screaming

Put his hand on her mouth wants to silence her

He will kill me he wants to strangle me

Help me

She was floundering on his chest and stillness air

Opacity everything touches her hands

Stay away from her

I looked at him and started to talk laughing and laughing

I won't let you kill me. I know you want to kill me

She was laughing hysteria and unbalanced

It was only a few minutes and fell on the ground unconscious

He carried it in his arms and extended it on the bed.

All my grandmother's stories, myths and myths were all

told with a bit of idiocy and spontaneity

Only those stories devils stories of Satan and his devil  
stories mysterious jinn

As a mystery buried treasure has only half a map

She was told with some caution, whisper and whisper

And a lot of fear

We did not know what their source was until we grew up

The jinn is real and mentioned in the Qur'an

The girl's condition worsened even further and it became  
a dead body that could not walk

Surrounded by her family and her husband's family from  
every direction the mother sits over her head mumbling  
some of the verses of the Koran

The surly husband is sullen

What happened to her What happened to her were all  
violent and illusory

I didn't hear her complaining about anything

His mother intervenes and her eye is set and God retaliates  
against envious people

That don't like good for anyone

The mother shakes her head agreeing to her words

The husband follows the words of his mother with you right is

Envious eye injured

I will bring the Sheikh today after Isha prayer to recite it

Paperless legitimacy

The girl wakes up looking at everyone with fragile looks

faint smiling feel the weight of her body and the absence of her tongue indicates to her mother that she wants water

Even the speech disappeared and became your deaf

After the Isha prayer, the sheikh was present in her room

Read what facilitates the Al-Quran

Devoted to envy

Her condition did not improve. She only drank a few drops of water that wet her throat every time and when she fainted for hours, maybe days.

She became lean popped bones of her face and bees her body

So as your rose became a barren desert did not rain since long ago

They still gather around asking God for mercy

Her husband's mother approached the mother and confused her in complete secrecy

I think your daughter will wear them reap

The mother was terrified and drove her head back and it was a snake bite her

The mother approached the mother of the husband's mother too

Frankly, I have a doubt about this, but I am growing up

Sure, there is one worker that has a job or magic

And the genie shed them, my heartbreak on your youth, my daughter

Others paid attention to what was going on between the two parents

Husband and brothers and sisters inquiring about the



subject of secret told them mother began to call everyone

Some of them denounced and some acknowledged

Start with the end

Everyone agreed that the infidel genie wears it

The husband came Sheikh Galilee did not comment anything but I will take it out of her body, God willing

He entered her room where her body was lying on the side of the moribund and was not aware of something like a special world she had created from her imagination

The smile is still drawn on her lips despite everything

Sheikh asked for clean water and the audience out of the room

Except for the husband, his mother and mother

He started reciting verses from the Holy Quran on the water.

Trying to make her drink to no avail

Her world was rejecting anything from reality, even if it was a return to life that the imaginary world might have liked

Sheikh looked at the pale inquiring faces

Lower his head and speak with a voice of sorrow and regret

There is only one solution to get the jinn out of her body

He asked the husband stammering and afraid what is the solution Mawlana

The solution is to hit her unprovoked at the beginning and not desirable and I will be forced to be severely beaten

The heart of the mother fell and sobbed faintly on her

daughter Will you feel beaten and hurt Mawlana asked the mother tragic

You won't feel anything

She may have bruises on her body but when she wakes up she will not remember anything

But it is very difficult and needs time and better if you all go out so as not to suffer and watch as I hit

Pain with fear and anguish is impossible to get out of my predecessor with it may wake up and do not find me

Mawlana does not have to start with what he sees fit answered the husband as well as his mother

He beat her on her feet first did not respond to the girl remained world peaceful pacifist

Sheikh did not receive and began to beat all the members of her body without mercy or compassion shouting loudest voice Come out, you damn Come out, the enemy of God Get out of the body of this virtuous woman

The girl did not lift a finger and did not cry for help begging did not ask mercy

She opened her eyes and looked around her eyes on the face of her mother smiled with satisfaction and joy

The Sheikh continued to beat her madly and angered by the unbelieving genie who challenges him and does not want to go out

The girl closed her eyes and handed her soul to where she decided to stay

The elder of Galilee came forth from her palpation of his pulse

Bugom and grief has killed her genie

Killed by the enemy of God

## Contents

The Remnants of a Dream Deluged with Love .....	9
Estrangement and Despondency .....	17
Absolution .....	22
Say Amen .....	26
Empurpled Quietude .....	29
Regrettably .....	33
Cherry Season .....	34
Serendipity .....	37
A Grey Reality.....	39
A dream and a wish.....	48
The Graveyards of Memories.....	52
Better a Man's Shadow than that of a Wall.....	56
Tattoo.....	58
A good reason.....	61
Her name was Farah.....	65
Me and the cigarette .....	69
Eternal slumber .....	72
She was possessed by a jinni.....	77

