

Amirah Al Wassif

The same old story

Every time I start to laugh  
Somebody invents a new way of laughter  
I run to the closest mirror  
Burying my swollen face  
Counting my disappointments on my fingers  
No music in the background  
Only the cracking of my bones  
Do you hear it?  
I see you on the walls  
Your purple face waving  
Like a curse  
I put a hand on my right chest  
Singing as if the world dissolved  
Between my knees  
In this story  
Adam didn't eat the forbidden fruit  
Just Eve who did  
He was busy  
Creating a sudden plot twist  
God upstairs  
Watching in silence  
In the mirror  
I see your favorite song  
Turned into a worm

Crawling toward my belly  
Your face  
Without features  
I ask you  
Are you hungry?  
You ask me  
How did you survive?  
And the rest is history.

To bury a curious girl

When I was younger,

I stood on a mountain of pillows

with a brave decision to swallow a whole finger. My father insulted me because I am curious.

All his life he wished to have a non-trouble baby whatever girl or boy.

My forefathers preferred to bury baby girls rather than put them

in carriages and sing them a lullaby.

I was born with a great motivation to scratch the sky Upon my shoulders, crazy monkeys and heavy weights, I used to bake my grief each night

And through the daylight, while they're trying to sell me,

I spend my time calculating the distance between my gender and my awaited funeral.

When I took my first steps, my tribe circled around me like bees.

They approached figuring out that I have thighs and breasts. They tucked me in the obedience pocket, they dwelled me in an iron cage.

They ate my wings, my ears. When I was younger,

I crawled towards my father's shoulders, I whispered, "how far does the world extend?"

He frowned and replied "just, look at the space between your legs."

Another chapter of life

When the sky fall down,  
Another chapter of life will soon open  
The butterflies would love to jump And the frogs would wish to fly  
Me and you will soon melt

In one cup of thoughts and feelings I will be there waiting for you  
In a porch covered by caramel  
There, my right hand on my chest  
Breathing through air made of poetry I am touched by generous spirits  
And thankful delights.

When the sky fall down,  
A great gate will soon appear In the midst of nowhere  
And a holy voice from the upstairs  
Will call us  
“ Come here, come here  
This is the end of the life Circus” Then we all will obey  
Satisfaction will water our thirsty souls

We all here bathe under heavenly showers  
I will not text anyone about the climate change I will not cry because of racism  
I will not lie in my bed  
Watching the breaking news.

I will not suffer anymore  
Here, just me and you dwell in the honey rivers  
The delicious touch our fingers sweetly  
Here, where no sky  
The curtains of eternal love Wave to us like a very long kiss The  
soul and these distant things That longed for.

## When I met the devil

I met the devil.

He was in his wheelchair moving through

the shelves of my library.

I kept silent to watch him.

He hadn't tusks nor claws.

Only a powerful motivator to absorb my diary.

I heard him

Repeating my words

,Saying them

In excitement. The first line of my diary

Made him sing

With cheeks flushed red.

The second line forced him

To fly in craze.

I kept watching him

On my knees

If he paid attention

To me,

He would hear

The cracking Of my bones.

The devil ate my words Stoned by

its delicious.

He continued

Orbiting around My moments

In amazement  
Until his eyes Caught my lastLine  
He sank in Eternal sadness.

It was my first timeto see a Devil Cries.

The devil kept reading

My diary in aweHis strong tone

Changed to Mourns.

I still rememberhow terrific

His looking was when he witnessedmy written griefs.

I also recall how

the salt rained downfrom his eyes

while breathingour tragedy

As humans.

I met the devil once

Since then,

I still wonder

Do our petty diaries

Have that ability

To turn the devil'sHair from black To white!?

## Against The Broiling Sun

I stood on my tippy toes

Near enough to touch God's arm.

My grandfather on his wheelchair

Laughing as if his whole life

Is a joke.

Everyone knows that he could

Shorten his long life through laughter. My mother on the ground

Peeling the beans

For preparing its soup.

Although she could use her grief Instead of the salt

She insists to pretend that

There is a great difference

In each taste.

My back against the broiling sun

Its flames hurt me

Whipping my flesh.

Corn husks dolls tucked

Between my legs

We sell the joy

To the needy children. On my toes,

I watched my family Gathering the pebbles

To make a house.

The flower which had grown

Between my lips

Create a magical ladder  
To the sky.

We murmur verses  
Through our flight From corner to corner. We have no  
walls Between us and God My mother used to Say  
that.

Her tender eyes Reflect how the Heaven is.

Working under the sun

Equals praying.

Each doll was given to a child Plant a star  
In our darkness.



## Prayers From Our House Roof

We were boiling bananas on the roof of our house. Mother's laughter  
clutched the heart of my ears.  
She was gossiping with a neighbor.  
Mother was storytelling, sweet as poetry. I loved  
To watch her tongue play the music of conversation.  
They worked on their knees, their noses colored by wood smoke. Boiling  
bananas was like a prayer  
We whispered, sang with faces lifted up, we made art  
Through peeling  
bananas, slicing them into pieces  
To boil on the fire, hoping for a kiss on a  
cheek  
From a bird; an old hymn bathing our exhausted souls. At the roof's edge, I  
overlooked a cavernous grotto, and I saw God cooking for children like me.  
I watched him prepare the dinner table for them in heaven,  
a kingdom of mercy. I stretched my arms to touch the magic, then ran to my  
mother, whimpering  
that I saw God cooking for the children. She smiled but continued talking  
with her neighbor. I yelled  
at my mother for attention, pointing, but she just smiled. I kept watching God  
make delicious food for one hundred children gathered on their knees  
around him, longing in awe. I waved to them,  
but they didn't notice me. I imagined the smell from our rooftop carried a  
kind of hope.  
Under my bare feet, bananas peels and two bowls, one for us and the other  
for the hungry people  
in our neighborhood. It became a ritual ever since one hundred children  
had died of hunger,  
One hundred innocent souls vanished. I swear I saw God cooking for them,  
but no one Believed me; they just kept smiling