
HAMOUT

النشر



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Novel

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Translated into English by:

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Dedication

To ?

Yes .. to ?

I dedicate this work to it.. I mean to the **Question Mark** which does not reach to **itself** in order to hope it to help me to reach the truth !!

I am still asking **ye** which curves over **itself** :

- If only ye change **yourself** and become straight..
Would we be born from the spring of the fire, or
from ashes?

Here I am drawing **ye** again and say what will happen?

Presentation

Hamout

.... Hamout ... a city of darkness and nightmare, as if it were a black cloud which besiege a sky of its sons. It melts them one by one .. it is an echo of arms and a painful complaint .. the fading sound of darkness and descent sorrow.

It creates the gangling of fear in order to survive the grandsons without identity or peace. It pours the rottenness of the days on them to throw them to drawn .. they inherits it fearing the water and responding to its call.

The city becomes a well which welcomes slow steps as if they are leaves falling in the slipping of the darkness so that ghosts can receive them... All these are the nakedness of the places and crusading of soul.

Something blackish persuades the houses and walls.

There... under the innocent fence, no one is waiting for an innocent deer or a golden day. Time is drunk of the birds' complaints because there are no trees for the birds to shelter and to order their nests.

“ Hamout “ is a mere deserted prayer or a silent flute burning in an agitated flaming emotion.

There...

They were tortured wildly to be covered with the trembling of death. Moans slip and bones remain a witness on the crimes of the sterile medals and decorations.

Here or there...

Among the uneven rocky roads or the obligatory exile.

I have hovered and I am still hovering around my questions, and the answer is drunk and dead.

What makes bullets crave us and delight ?” -

The ways of committing death shapes make me ask myself about the name of « Hamout », its origin, and its name... I am often stormed by the question, I look for the secret of the name, where does it come from? What is its root?

Should I accept the reality as it is until my turn comes and walk obediently behind what has happened previously ready for me to die? And who owns such knowledge? I do not refuse only for refuse sake... but my desire to know the person who our survival all is due to his attendance.

I don't refuse that just for the sake of refuse... but I wish to know the person whom our existence of all of us is up to his attendance. Sometimes fear haunts me when I see one of the disasters of nature, between a second and another death inhales the last breaths of the drown people in the flood at a spot of "Hamout". No one survives from the group drowning season except for a woman or a child, or maybe an old man...All people submit to the rule of agitated waves, but the sky approaches close to someone

and strongly takes him up over any hard hostile, and throws him on the coast among the remains of the destroyed houses due to the water agitation.

I appear as an ordinary man who wades in the tracks of life amidst the people of «Hamout»... I was born of parents who loved each other to the extent of becoming one. They begot me in a chilly winter.

Now, the glowing of pampering and security of love no longer embrace me...I lost them in one second...It seems that in their love union they have taken an oath to lie together in their last falling under «Hamout» ground.

I do not remember the reason of their sudden absence because I was young child of four years old when the corruptions of life have fallen suddenly over my childhood coloured in lost and maze!!

There... in the tracks of panic and losing in a horrible moment, my little heart silenced listening in my aunt's lap...when she returned with the dust stuck on her dress from the cemetery... She took me to see my new tomb on the «Hamout» ground.

I missed them a lot at the beginning and at the end of the day... in the strange and close faces when they lead me to the cemetery after forty days passed... I implored all the dead to have mercy on them... later I set a bitter child cry.

I heard them saying:

«From ash to ash”

I did not understand the meaning of the saying then, and its secret continued to dig deeply inside me until I got rid of my fear and the silence of the house... I remember I hang on my dolls whenever my aunt took me to visit our house, especially when the broker took the house key and gave it to the new buyer.

That was what had remained to me from the wide existence and playing among laps.

I stayed alone there covering myself with my confused questions. I wondered among trees and valleys, mountains and plains, rivers and banks, narrow allies and neat streets, demolished houses and build-

ings, fertilized full of fruit land and moor, the places full of life and dead ones... from here and there, I did not see anything except a ghost appearing suddenly and disappear in a glance of an eye.

(1)

«Mohammad»...

is my name in the birth certificate but my aunt used to call me «Aref»...I don't know why she liked that? Anyone who knows did not know anything about his real appearance in life. Was he fated to live as an alien and an orphan; and that an unknown person has taken him out of his parents' laps and turned him to a being full of questions?

Nothing but questions are unified in my depths about falling tree leaves...about animals and birds developed diseases that terminate them...ending up their cycles ... then other beings sculptured by other lives.

I watched cockroaches, pests and worms; and how they lived and collapsed under the steps of a pedestrian or they thrust between strong tree branches from which they could not escape ... or they died of smothering.

Trees were alive ... they also died between the saws of the tree cutters in order to become fuel for heating.

To die of burning was taken as a punishment for their greenness because they dreamed with perpetual greenness... and no doubt those which desired to perpetual life were fated to burn!!

Another tree became bricks for houses roofs... or thrones for leaders who also pet to take power forever by means of killing anyone who opposed power based on an illusion saying that their power would continue to exist by hanging their opponents or crucifying them alive until birds snatched their brains!! These birds' brains were eaten by a disease called «bird flu».

In an icy moment, the ropes of gallows turn round the necks of those who pet in blood for their endless stay.

Their death was light to the others clearing the way ahead to start a different march.

The others... may come in a humble clothes, religious sacred, grim faces and masks... humbly or haughtily... in a truthful patriotism or deception.

In «Hamout's land, all of them are just a chess game in the hand of a huge ghost who runs away very quickly whenever you try to reach him.

Does he appear to me because he knows my longing to know him... my need to talk to him and to discover his secret? Who is behind his appearance and disappearance? Who leads him to plant his rabies in the city starting from the human being to insects?

I am not a saint so that he can satisfy on me and insist on waving to me ghostly... These if only he were originally a saint and approaching to those whose souls become sacred and his deeds are protected.

If he were really a saint, then why he used to leave darkness fingerprints on the coffins and let the hearts of mothers and fathers drink departing poisons and never sleep until he attends again and make them rest from poisonous sufferings? Then, who is he?

Why has he left his fingerprint? Do ghosts have fingerprints?

I have seen him passing quickly to put his thumb on a new tombstone, nobody see him but why does he appear to me leaving questions gurgling in my throat?

I tour the horizons day and night asking:

Who are you?»”

Why do I choose the worker who returns to his work by train? No one knows him but the whistling and waiting in the faces... He returned wet in rain that night, shouldering his day's burden, carrying a small bag in which he hid a gift for his only daughter's birthday; the girl who has come to life after waiting for ten years, prayers and vows!!

He was trembling of darkness and cold but when your wind blew among his ribs and his first step to the house yard threshold, you stood as a barrier be-

tween him and his joy. Are you the one who stop joy?

If you are not, why, then, is your thumb fingerprint amidst the threshold?

Among your feet, the little girl's invocation and the joy of the wife, the husband fell down with a heart attack turned him dead.

What I have heard that night his wife's screaming and the weeping of the darkness.

I found nothing in return but the whistling of the wind... I asked that wind:

"Will your turn come, too?"

The rain... Does it also have a turn?"

But I returned with no answers, the silence of the sun is the best proof for

Unknowing its delayed day!

The moon, the lightening, the planets are bewildered by their answers under the hits of the silence.

They shine as they are fated to, waiting for getting rid of the burdens of their lights and after that rest!!

One day, I stopped at a daffodil blossom bud... that naked except of the beauty childhood after I embraced it kindly, I asked it:

“Will you remain as I’m feeling you now, and will you young bloom or will a richly mischievous boy pass to pluck you?”

“Will you know who sent the richly mischievous or will you let the staff to those who are bewildered by questions?”

He was really a new-born boy so I raise my eyes to the sky and begged it to welfare him until I see him a full beauty daffodil.

I returned to my house with a smile bending on my mouth. My arm also slightly held a notebook to record my daily scenes.

I do not know why ambiguity does not slow in its walk with me and live as I live in an isolation which

I besiege it and besiege me whenever the question becomes strong in my voice.

One tiring winter, I slept but then I woke up on the voice of our neighbor who was spiritless- powered looking at his daughter's departure to the darkness thrust in her little coffin while the rain was washing the sadness dress and the house walls.

When farewell people stopped and returned to their houses, the ghost kidnapped a person clad in black clothes including a black head cover... then he disappeared.

I hastened my steps following his trace so that I could find out anything to leads to him.

My questions were different, childhood used to evoke tears that seduced the eyes to fall tears.

I returned disappointed but when my sight cast on our neighbor's door, I recognize the same big thumb, an illusion of the ghost... this made the doubts work inside my head:

“Why is not the thumb seen by anybody? Why only I see it!”

The sound of the darkness was wild complaining about the injustice of nature, and the wind rush into a fight against the doors.

My room seemed like a harbor with no beach. Everything expanded that night and the fireplace of my questions became embers heating the axis of the existence.

There were many things in my mind so that I became mindless and voiceless. My thoughts froze and I became isolated... I tried to set free from isolation setting out to the street. A scene of a she-bird which putting straws to build a nest shocked me as well as another scene of spiders weaving their net among the soft branches. A speckled snake touched my foot as it was passing to a swamp surrounding the tree with the nest.

The feeling that a person, who was looking for the unknown, terrified my track and direction which

was not led to any direction...I returned back to my house at the time that the dawn was sending some of its threads on the doors ... I was terrified with what I had seen... Different size thumbs were on the doors of “Hamout” houses.

The strange thing was some doors were left without thumbprints... I hastened my steps while my forehead was sweating silently. Some finger prints were smaller than the others. Some other trees' leaves fell but other trees were still flourishing and up straight.

I approached putting my ear close to the houses listening so that I could hear a yell or weeping... the ghost used to appear only after burying the dead. But the silence of deep darkness answered me with the silence of the houses. Therefore, I returned shouldering my burdens and fears. The moments were heavy and boring, which I spent waiting the break of the morning.

With the first spot of light, I got out again. Despite of passing of some young pupils carrying their full-

in- book bags but something scaring mixed with my body organs... my eyes were searching about something which they did not know.

I sat in the nearest café to drink tea. A little boy passed selling newspapers while the feet of the pedestrians were invading the area... I bought a newspaper and inserted my eyes among its letters.

A gentle waft of breeze blew. With its blowing, I tried to avoid sweat flew on my neck after a fever which my body had been developed. While I was reading the newspaper about a coming war, I got up as if a murderer snake had bit me!!

It seemed that fingerprints were a harbinger of collective deaths... of deaths that aimed certain people.

I saw a neighbor who used to live in the third house after my house. He was drinking tea and reading the newspaper like me. Ahh... if only he knew that his door, his older son's and his nephews were among the fingerprints.

I hid my eyes under the glasses avoiding meeting them in his eyes.

My Lord, inspire me patience or deport away this ghost... I became scare of his approach and appearing to me!!

Fever increased like electricity which prevailed all my body. I carried the newspaper under my armpit and returned back home... On my way back, my seventh neighbor came to me and invited me to his eldest son's wedding party.

"... with pleasure!!"

My response was lukewarm while fire was blazing inside me because there were three fingerprints on their door and I knew he had three sons!!

I did not know how or when but what I realized was death would prevail over them on a certain moment!!

One night, I heard footsteps near my door... I saw an ambiguous figure appearing to me... he was face-

less trying to touch and feel me so that I froze in my place. I did not know what to say... Suddenly, I saw weird things!!

The houses were collapsing... Fires devoured everything... I felt myself part of this crowd... I was not fortified like them... They were wearing helmets on their heads. They also were running... ambulances were touring the streets... Also trucks for transporting the corpses filled the area.

I did not feel myself there standing on the ground... What I knew was I was in the ground of "Hamout"... but where I was then... close to fires that devoured green and the dry near the piles of corpses... near the howling of dogs licking the remains of burned bones.

I wanted to go back to what I had been before the appearing of this stranger; to see how my figure had become after the horrors of what I had seen and to move my tongue for it might utter a word that guided me to my true reality.

Everything became far away from me... everything... even myself and my identity... Everything was looking for a thing ... or nothing!!

All people in “Hamout” were absent-minded... I heard the moans of the mothers, the wives, the sisters and the fathers... All of them were sniffing and slugging... An old man yelled:

“What a disaster of “Hamout” !! What a disaster... my four children, Thy wisdom, O Lord!!”

Another voices strangled in tears set out, then they disappeared in the crowds. Torn mouths... confused mouths... mouths were strangled by weeping.

As if I were on board of a huge ship of dreams or full of images. That moment, I realized that I was standing on my house threshold and my old neighbor was shaking me:

“What’s wrong with you, my son... What freezes you like this... come on, wake up a little... should I fetch some water for you? “

Absent-mindedly, I replied:

Thank you, mom!! But what happened? Where am I ? “

“You’re on your house threshold, my son... wouldn’t you attend our neighbors consolation?»

“Abo Hamed had four coffins waiting at his house gate waiting for burying. All the four dead bodies were burned so that they couldn’t be recognized whether they were his or they belonged to some other people!! But in the end, they were citizens of “Hamout “!!

2

That was the law of stick and stones, the dagger and the sword, the projectile and the bullet, the atomic bombs and the uranium, the law of mass killing, the shipwrecks, the law of the floods and the disasters, the law of tsunami and the strong wind... the fall of the aircrafts and the epidemics!!

Consequently, they were all fingerprints and thumbprints... even if the ways differed; they remained one thumb or thumbs climbing our lives and strangled them... they widely extended to the north and to the south... isolation and silence... screaming and noise, peace and war... thumbs... thumbs since the first father up... up till when we did not know... It was the unknown answer which I had hoped to get from the ghost to explain to me and to clear the shape of «when» of this unknown time condition... also to explain to me his attitude toward what had

happened and what might happen... his personal point of view, his heart... I wished he would reveal to me that damned heart to see its content, its shape, its intentions, its strength and weakness and its tyranny and submission.

I hoped he explain to me how was his fingerprint on Hiroshima. Did mass deaths have one fingerprint or many fingerprints equal to the number of burned people in it?

The victims of the World War I and the World War II... Was his thumb there fertilized and dewed with the death scent?

When would the veil be revealed about (Who, why and where) Maybe we were close to the (when) and we did not know... I thought we really were close to it.

Were the infertility of land and the dying of hunger a standard to the one who was really heartless? Dying with a bullet, a projectile or poison was much easier than dying of hunger and thirst.

Dying slowly is a universal crime. Had the children of hunger committed crimes to be punished to a death of hunger?

If he was able to harvest mankind like a farmer who harvested his field, then why was there torturing of hunger and thirst?

What heart did this ghost have?

I was really raving... Maybe he had no relation of my raving, or maybe he was a mere ghost of a certain person who used to feel pain and owned a standard of humanity, and realized and estimated what he had order.

When narrowness chased a human being, he would rave and see the world from an eye of a needle!!

The real giveaway of life was death... this was really very weird...the award of light was darkness!!

The perfumes and upscale clothes, cosmetics and jewelries, the naked and the wearing of clothes and fatal pesticides which could kill one hundred insects

in one puff... all of these were really weird comparisons... the jewelry maker, the buyer, cloth wearer, pesticide creator... all of them would be eaten by worms and insects!!

Bellies and thrones owners, kingdoms, tyranny and one fingerprint carried them to worms!!

Universal giveaway made life something forbidden for all. They should be sent to worms as if these damn worms had said to us:

-” If you made pesticides, your destiny would be to me. Then, create what you want, I will devour all of you as I will!!”

Man is a weird being who determined to accept his reality, and then he never satisfies when he owns what he hopes or wishes.

People ran to buy real states and lands stained in blood and obscene thrones... tears tired of patience and arms downtrodden of toil... all of them were covered by forbiddance.

The mornings were full of storms whenever I thought about their direction... The days were the chorus playing snoring.

People were urgent, buying, selling and spitting on the ground. They even breathed the steam of their spits.

No one asked about time among the tents of the weddings, or among funerals standing in the streets of “Hamout”.

Place had its ascendancy and presence whether time prolonged or shortened, changed its way or remained as it was... the restaurants and the markets, greengrocers and fruit sellers, shops selling ready-made clothes and textiles, new-born baby, the boy and the elderly, the projecting breasts and graceful bodies, healthy bodies and fat bodies, folded and unfolded, foolishness and wisdom, the sheep, the camels and the horses: “Hamout” was a constant trip.

And I ... I who was searching about me among them; and about a ghost?

I had to ask and answer my questions... Why did people become human beasts?

Beasts devoured each other. They speared their fingers in the throats. They destroyed all limits and abused women and children. Did Adam's apple witness a creative sin?

One apple changed the march of Adam; Do the Satan and Eve have a role in that?

What seduction was that? Was not Adam doomed to that by God although he had created him? Was He teaching him a lesson of obedience and willpower?

What about us now after sin became greater and disobedience exacerbated?

Did God create another tree inside us in order to test us?

And what did «Hamout» eat to be punished? What shape was the tree... a palm tree or an apple tree? Did the sap or the leaves make a mistake?

The tree of «Hamout» was nourishing then on corpses, on wounded and whipped people as well

as on the prisoners' sweat and on those who were beheaded and martyrs.

Did the ghost turn round the tree? Did he attend its roots death?

«Woe to thee, «Hamout», your tree was spilt, raise up the land to thee and make out of it bread for hungry people»

I seemed to repeat my delirium whenever I was alone by myself.

What was «Hamout», its borders or its guards to me!! Certainty in it was a prickly road and truth was unknown!!

Events took me back to it, whenever I was about to move away of thinking about it!!

Rumors spread in the city saying there was a Satan appearing at night and disappearing in the daylight. One confirmed that he saw him riding a wooden horse.

Others denied what he said and accused him of lying!! They insisted that they saw an old man lean-

ing on his walking stick; he had long teeth extending to his chest!!

On the other hand, some boys said that they saw a very tall man to the extent that they could not see his head. He had very big feet as if they were spades; and two arms drawn behind him as if he were dragging huge earthworks behind him!!

Some people volunteered to guard at night in order to prevent the danger of that Satanic being... they damned him because he made their days to be anxiety and their nights watching up and horror!

Twenty nights passed and their alleged Satan did not appear.

A woman haunted by devils said that she had seen him approaching close to her house. When she recognized him, he converted to a tree. And she pointed to an old tree whose trunk and roots were torn away!! All laughed and deprecated that because the location of the tree and its shape never changed for hundreds of years; as if it had pointed to the depth of its originality and extension to the ancestors...

but she insisted that he came closer from her house door... and she smelled his smell and the pants if his breaths!!

All committed themselves to silence but one of them shook his hand deprecating listening to the obsessed talk.

She turned her lips and entered her house insulting all of them.

When I returned from the crowd, I remembered her saying «approaching closer to her door», I hastened my steps to check the door. I breathed the sigh of relief when I did not see the fingerprint of the ghost.

I got out shopping some staffs in the morning. Near the grocer's, I saw the obsessed old woman buying wheat. She asked me to take her in my car and drop her at her house because the staffs were heavy to carry for her. I held her trembling hand to cross the street but she escaped her hand from mine

strongly... I did not know what made her do that... I hastened after her to pay her attention to what she had done, but a lorry full of cargo did not realize that to us... her crossing did not realized, and I could not pay her attention.

We collected the remains of her corpse and we complete the funeral... What surprised me that this time the thumbprint was on her forehead dunked in blood!

Did he change the color of the fingerprints?

It was her first day as a newly born in the laps of death, but she was The life old woman.

(3)

While we were in the ambulance on our way to the hospital, I hoped to take the thumbprint but the blood dried quickly and did not leave any trace but its remains.

What an unfortunate!! What was happening to me? Did he want to show me death face to face?

Was he the Satan whom the old woman had seen?

I wondered and my voice echoed inside my chest as if it were refraction!!

I heard the children of our locality, while they were playing, conveying chats heard from their parents:

«Satan took revenge from the old woman because she had known his place pointing to the tree wherein he had hidden. Every night, he appeared and clad in darkness.

The oldest child among them asked the others not to play in the street at night.

The women stopped to go to the old tree and got blessing of it; and to wipe it with henna and the scent of incense no longer was to be inhaled every Thursday.

Fear became the inheritance of the ancestors and approaching to it meant discontent and inevitable death to the people of «Hamout»... The ancestors' tree since the time when they left it as an inheritance to us; and we did not take care of it. Consequently, our inheritance developed drought and dryness.

It no longer leafed out as before; neither its shoots extended to the four directions but it remained as it was before displaying its trunk extending to the root embracing the soil and gazing at our faces.

Talking about the Satan occupied all the cafes and markets, reasonable people and insane people... dead animals also occupied their minds.

One visit to « Abboud » café, I heard a rumor about the appearance of the Satan in one of the

cowsheds... due to his massive scene, the cow became crazy so that they ran out to the streets; and anyone who ate from their meat would become crazy... therefore the Ministry of health executed hundreds of the cows... but greedy people sold them to butchers like them for lower prices. On the other hand, those who feared God submitted to the Ministry decision.

Some of those who bought the infected beef said that he had found the word «God» engraved on the cow's thigh! I did not know whether it was a rumor told by the butcher himself to sell all the beef in his shop or it was true because people left the butcher's and chicken shops and went to the greengrocers instead.

The Satan got out from his den and sneezed; and because he was close to a cock on one of the «Hamout's» walls, the cock developed bird flu!!

This made me repeat my questions about the name of «Hamout» and its origin and detail. It was

not a special city of mine. And its population, who I knew because the news of bird flu was reported by the seen, heard and read world mass media.

What a sneeze whose spray spread in the air to reach all parts of the world west and east, north and south!

Maybe the Satan had assistants who used to help him to convey and spread these diseases; or was he so huge to an extent that the whole earth was between his hands in the size of a coin!!

This meant that «Hamout» was not my city, but it was a «universal» city and death was a funnel of life which used to react with the existed staffs in the universe. Then it came to terminate that relation.

It was an endless prolonging forest; and the Satan and the ghost were the only ones who navigated us to a certain time... and with their existence there was no absolute time.

In a train directed to one of «Hamout» towns, I got on a regular wagon; and not on the first class...

because I liked the crowd and seeing people and listening to their talks, their mind wonderings and all of what belong to them when they inserted in a wagon... a young man sat in front of me whose ill father was leaning on him. They were aiming to a heart specialist doctor. The ill father had not known any heart specialist; nor did he have acquaintances in the city which he was aiming to. He demanded to come closer to me to take my advice... since I was on the same direction; I agreed to accompany him until he would go back with his father after recovering.

We were counting the trees that passed us. We also jested... the night train drove us while the faces and eyes were gazing at the time... Some of them had private speech with their companies. The others committed themselves to silence along the trip.

We were a mixture of silence and gossips... pale faces and young faces... Most of them slept of tiredness. Others put down their bags to eat a meal prepared at home.

We recorded his father to enter the heart specialist hospital to make needed diagnosis. Then we sat in a popular restaurant to have lunch meal... He ordered grilled kebab and French fries. I also ordered the same except for the French fries but I had bread instead.

The food was served for us and we started devour morsels of food greedily but I developed a sudden colic which led me to enter the bathroom... I was absent only for seconds but when I returned, I found him pale so I asked him: «What's wrong? Do you feel tired?»

He replied: «I don't know... the shape of thumb swelled in the loaf of bread seduced me so I devoured it without permission from you... the morsel seemed to punish me that I stole it from you».... He smiled then he faded as an ember which was spilled with water. He put his head on the table among the remains of food and snorted. I felt his soul circling around me and recommending me to look after his father.

This was the second time which the ghost put me to the test directly face to face with death... It was not my determined day but it was the young man's who came looking for his father's life but he exchanged death with his life.

I knew that no one was beside me... but I continued to talk to him as a close friend to me:

-“Why didn't you appear to me?”

-“To face each other face to face... man to man, and not ghost to man.”

People gathered around me to calm me thinking that was under sudden delirium and shock... but I did not care to any voice but my voice:

-“Where are you now?,,, in my house, on the way, in the middle of the city, behind a door waiting for your brother or your father, between two open arms to embrace, where are you?”

In the afternoon, I delivered the young man to the mortuary and I told his father what had happened.

I returned like a bird soaked in black rain... I carried a dead wooden body whose power sapped... The key disobeyed me... I did not know what had happened to it... in the last grab to it, I saw a thumb on the top of the door. My eyes petrified... my organs paralyzed... I put myself on the bed ready for my last moment... all black thoughts assailed in my head... all the events which I had, and all forms of deaths, my eyes counted the ceiling holes... they were more than twenty... How did not I see them before and fill them with gypsum?... What was the use then of thinking about that, I replied myself and laughed a pale laughter.

I blamed myself because I did not get married and remained without offspring to succeed me after such a moment... I loved my neighbor « Suad» but her family got her married to a wealthy man while I was still a student in the secondary school... She swore to me if she had a baby, she would name him Mohammad in order to hear my name every second; and she could repeat it in her melodious voice.

She used to stand at the door steps , whenever she visited her parents, and used to call her son in a loud voice as a message to me:

«Where are you my love... come and don't disappear off my sight, I'm afraid from your playing in the street... don't you know, son, how much

I'm afraid about you? I love you, mom!!

I used to get out quickly stealing a glance of her, but I entered fearing the gossips and speculations of the quarter women.

Lovely memories assailed on me: our first kiss under the shade of that tree now haunted by a ghost as they pretended... and when I felt with my hand her projecting breast, she fled returning to her house.

Oh... of the first and last light in my life... What would she do if she heard the news of my death tomorrow or after a period of time?

Would she go to our tree and weep her late love?

I knew she did not get familiar with her husband because she was obliged to marry him... so

she would untie her braids rubbed with musk and mourned silently.

Ice crept on my body so I started collecting my let-down body and I circled it round... I used to look at the clock on the wall whenever I remembered something ... the metal colluded with the ghost and never announced which moment its hands would be coalesced.

I did not pray wishing reward or fearing but I prayed with my body lying and I prayed saying» there is no God but Allah, Mohammad is his messenger» hundreds of times... I did not remember how many times I «praised Allah» between my lips... numbers disappeared from me, my eyes and my memory... until I woke up on meows of baby kittens.

It was the morning... I felt all my members, I rejoiced and stood up quickly to the meows of the baby kittens... they were five beautiful baby kittens. The mother cat was lying and she was gazing to them.

I never liked cats... but it was my amity to old woman who preceded me to death... She used to

keep and raise a white beautiful cat... I took her to my house pitying her from hunger... and then she died like the old woman leaving to raise her five baby kittens!!

Therefore, the ghost entered my house yesterday... it seemed to be a beginning of friendship.

(4)

Did we die to live or did we live on «Hamout» land waiting inevitable death?

Is there really life after death? Did not our death deserve reward of new life after death? We were punished due to our lives and it ought to be a reward.

We embraced, loved, ate, contended with each other, forgave, recollected and forgot... moving, noise, sleeping and wakefulness... all would go down the drain.

Was it coincidence that we came to collect our hours since we were born in order to summarize them in a second or maybe fewer than a tenth of a second?

As if we were in a circus and we would fall the curtain after the game was over.

Was I really Mohammad himself and that was his shadow following me; or I followed my shadow and hastened after it?

Drops of rain which the trees were waiting for, fertilizers and wind, corellas; how were they mastering their connections with life so that nature unveiled and cleared up their termination language and showed them its other face?

«When would, ye the silent, appear to me? I would not follow your shadow; let's face each other, why then should you disappear? Or might you feel panic? What was the distance between you and me?

What was the way which I should go on to see you?

You told me a lot of questions and I wanted satisfactory answers from you.

Why did you put me before your silence? Who were you?

Questions rose up to my head so that I was about to be crazy.

Did all those who wanted to know you or came closer to you become crazy?

«I'm alone tonight in my house... There are only orphan little kittens, two of them died yesterday, yes, and the third will die tomorrow, I know that.. All of them will die!»

«Your thumbprint is still on my door, whenever I erase it at night, it will be settled in the morning on other places of the door.»

«As far as you're circling around me these days, death is, no way, in my house... so let's be friends, what's your name?»

I was about to end up my question when I heard a movement in my sleeping room... while I was lying on my bed, I said:

- "I see you're alone like me, no friend, no relatives or family... I don't think you love somebody as all lovers do?"

"Why did you make a group of spiteful men and killers stop a wedding procession in «Hamout» to

slay all the people of the procession? They threw their corpses in the river. The men raped their women before their eyes. Also the bride had been raped for several days while her lover handcuffed looking at her with insane eyes. Where were you of them and from the mosque sheikh? Did you consider him unbeliever when he sheltered the killers and the crime of raping and killing occurred in his mosque before his eyes?

To whom was your punishment and how did you put your thumbprint here?

Did not the print disappear in the water? They threw the corpses in the river.

I did not know whether killing was raping to test the oppressor or the oppressed, the killer or the killed...such as those wreaked havoc in «Hamout» and you were still ungrateful waiting your appointment, your Law.

“Be fair for once and explain to me honestly and honorably the honor of men not ghosts!!»

«Uncover your mask because we're in the time of masks... All of them have masks; all of them are sleeping, only you are the wakeful!!»

“I heard your steps, ye Invisible; I don't know if I will call you the ghost or the invisible?»

«Choose your name if you hear me, I'm sure you hear and see me.. and for this you chose me...»

The souls turned into hatred, consciences into mud, to cannibals...you might purify the innocents with deaths; and increase he who crooked his mind and conscience.

Mirrors of illusion, whenever I searched for myself in them, I would not find a shape of myself.. I only saw shadows and blackness.

The neighbor conspired against his neighbor and turned into an evident snake, people in «Hamout» slept waiting their destiny at any moment... greedy dreams realized but the poor people's dreams never came through... the greedy people maybe had better luck than the poor... It might be a universal

wisdom... to make «Hamout» the revelation of the oppressors, the opportunists and the killers.

I heard something like the rustles of the trees or the parted of a long dress kidnapping its wind beside me... I grabbed firmly using all my strength... bristles increased closing to me, that moment; I realized that I would celebrate his presence.

Everything seemed weird to me: my house, my mattress, my covers, myself... even I myself became weird to myself.

I became an object with two arms and two eyes, a sign and breaths rising and falling, the floor of the room turned round swiftly and slowly, then it accelerated more than before, I heard strong breaths rustling my neck, my hair volatilized and my body became lighter as a little baby, then it became heavier like a mountain.

I thought he was eager to take me to a certain place, I did not know exactly where, maybe where he used to live... suddenly, I felt a flood of transpar-

ency and tranquility... I rubbed my eyes hardly, then slowly, then hardly again until I saw him sitting before me.

I stiffened like a tree in a drought... I did not utter a word ... All he did was that he sat and switch on the television and silenced to listen to the news bulletin.

The news was about Sandy Hurricane and that it would be most severe one which would stroke American and Canada.

The television showed horrible pictures of destruction which resulted after the hurricane; then the newscaster continued reading the news in a speechless face while my mate showed no impression affected by the horror of the pictures.

(Now, Sandy becomes a post-tropical hurricane. It passed over New Jersey coast at eight o'clock p.m. local time of the American eastern coast (mid-night GMT) with wind speeds up approximately 85 miles/hour (137 km/h).

The American National Center of Hurricanes said that the area near «Atlantic City» was stricken by The hurricane severe wind and heavy rain; and that the water flooded the streets in New york, Long Island and New Jersey.

The water also flooded entire quarters South of Manhattan due to large floods resulted from the hurricane in New York; the water level of East River and Hudson River increased, and their water flooded the tunnels and Battery Park area south of Manhattan. The hurricane might cause damages to around 50 million people in the U.S.A. Hundreds thousands had been evacuated from their houses and the electrical power went out for about million people).

Smiling, he extended his hand and switched out the television. Then he looked at my face which was crowded by death and destruction scenes.

Was not that crazy to meet at the moment of termination of thousands and at the presence of death? I could not ask any question about his thumbprint

here... how, where and what shape... I was infected by muteness.

He pointed to me with his finger:

«I'll transport you beyond life if you wish. But if it was hard for you, we will go to my house.» He silenced for a while and then resumed his speech:

«Here I am before you, now... what do you want to know? You exhausted me with your questions and your insistence on seeing me; here I am... wearing a costume of a man and talking to you. You said previously: Let's meet man to man... and we're now together, my friend.”

I asked him: «What's your name?»

He said: «Aziz. And you're Mohammad»

My joints trembled with another question: «Were you there, with Sandy?»

The moment he shook his head denoting «yes», the world turned me round and I fell unconscious!!

(5)

I did not know how much time I spent, I did not know how was my shape or his shape because he appeared to me suddenly in the shape of a man as he said, maybe he was not human, a jinn for example, or a ghost... but he presented to me in the shape of a strong, tough, quiet and staid man.

I checked the place; it was so quiet, therefore I realized that he had left me to wake up alone; and that I was not able to discover him or to talk to him.

I did not take more than some seconds to get up out of my bed. When I went toward the kittens, I found them sleep as if they were in a special parade to face a new destiny!!

I entered the supply store in the kitchen and got some tea bags. There was a spider at the door of the store inserted among its cobwebs. I tried to move

it but it did not move. I smiled and uttered some words whispering:

“Even the spiders are not safe of you today!!”

I prepared a light breakfast and left the house toward the street without determining my direction.

The street sweepers were cleaning the road from the remains of blood and fingers left in a corner of the pavement... there were remains of a corpse which they were trying to collect them in sacks stained with dirt and blood.

While I was in a deep sleep or unconscious, I seemed I did not hear the sound of explosions in the street and noise did not wake me up...I knew why he left me and ordered his ambiguous ghosts to clean sons of “Hamout” out of life, they had a hand and a fingerprint in every inch of it.

After hours, everything returned to its previous status and every one was busy receiving a new day.

No one was talking, all of them were working silently, no one was laughing... I sat at the nearest

café... they were smoking silently, nothing was heard but the sounds of sipping tea and fingers cracking... They were porters, poor people, workers, employees, bread and pies sellers, they were just beings moving... oh, my Lord, what's wrong with people today, what a deep sleep that "Aziz" made me enter in... Did he mean that in order not to let me know previously his deeds?

Maybe his harvest was the most number of those who were killed with shells of a terrorist organization hit men were the causes.

He evaded from me definitely to put me in the morning before the blood smell.

I left the café and walked away discovering the misery of this day and I found out about whore democracy, naked freedom which deluded "Hamout". The eyes were naked off tears or became stones and the smiles became a beast growing the teeth of sadness.

The damn sadness came out its lair like a wolf, and let the hearts like raging horses which rushed into a catastrophe's lap secreted by the darkness ghosts.

Falsity, malice, hatred, bribe, theft, killing, displacement, children theft and selling them to rich people, legal adultery including minor girls' marriage, and the daily newspapers headlines and "Hamout" was watching the legal and illegal sins... and stroke the spark of silence.

There were no longer sanctities of holy places, churches and guardians of Allah's tombs... The human devils sneaked to the daily sustenance, water and electricity, to the hungry bellies and the naked; and they subsisted on them, on the sustenance, food and smiling.

The polytheistic of colors, religions and nations became no longer a divine wisdom of Allah's creations and peaceful coexistence, but it became war against the flesh-color, race, religion and the spot of land whose any span of it became profaned and a spot of fire.

"Hamout" was crowded by intruders who spoiled beautiful life in it and started, in their names and

in the name of Allah, to harvest souls; and to make killing those who opposed them lawful after they had disbelieved them. Therefore, they pretended the right to slay the disbelievers as if they were the swords of Allah... they wreaked havoc, abused and raped little and young girls; They also described themselves as “the warners” but they were the most dangerous people on the name of “Allah” due to the magnifying of the fierce animals in them... they legalized lust for themselves with the right of captivity and raping women, and burning the quarters and neighborhoods as if their lust never completed without burning... they breached hatred of life not loving it!! They also buried any high wish or dreams which led to virtue and perfection.

I returned back to the house hoping to be free of a day in which tears flooded from the epicanthic before the eyes... I crossed the road slowly although my feet were about not to bear me... I had a hunch that I would find him there waiting for me, my hunch came true... I saw him prepared a meal for us and sat waiting me to come.

We sat eating silently, both of us looked to the eyes of the other but did not speak, both of us withdrew a question that lied in the irises waiting for the initiative of the other.

I drank a glass of water and dared to talk:

“Were you there yesterday, in the street parallel to the Madhouse, the Nursing Home and the orphanage?”

“Yes” he replied.

And he continued eating careless to my sadness. We spent a good while eating silently but suddenly I burst as if I had an agitated volcano inside me:

“Nobody is safe of your harm. Are you hungry for meal of the elderly, madmen and orphans?”

Was the flesh mushy and delicious?”

I knew what malice was in your heart, weren’t there any deterrent to your deeds?

Your toughness, your tyranny, the number of the slayed people in the churches and mosques; did not

you have pity on their scenes, their trembling hearts
fearing of slaying?

“Your secret thoughts are not like your white
dress now, certainly, you’re on constant dispute be-
tween your apparent and subcontractors.”

“Tell me who push you to do that?”

“Who makes you justify your ends to reap a hu-
man harvest?”

“ you are the enemy of yourself before you were
our enemy in “Hamout” where you created to us
wars and causes, poisoned the thoughts and inten-
tions, planted the disputes to watch the battles; and
to name yourself as conqueror king.

“There is no contentment in comfort, no peace we
hope victory of it... Do you call that bravery of you?

Does not your heart beat in good morals and love
one day?

Are good and evil equal to you so that unfair gov-
ernment rule us... consequently, peoples die and
burn alive?

What heart do you have, cruel man? What is the measurement of good and bravery to you? What is obedience?

I think that you're an obedient and fearful slave because only the fearful and obedient slave sack the people and legalize the injustice."

"...obey whom? You, (Aziz)?"

I started to laugh hysterically and madly... I laughed for the sake of laughter... while he was eating as if I had not directed the speech to him... he wiped his mouth off some remains of food; and he drank another sip of tea, then he stood up:

"Yes I'm an obedient slave... so don't empty your angry blame on me"

"A slave?!! A slave to whom, you cruel!!"

"I'm a slave of my Lord (Jalil)" the dignified"

"Dignified"? Who is "Dignified" who you disguise under his name and under his command?"

"You'll know later, not now."

“When? Grievances have exacerbated; and killing has become easy as a water drink... How come that toughness meets frailty? Can you tell me?”

“What do you mean? Will you clear up that?”

He answered me with a question and his eyes were on the clock, I did not answered him, I wished to leave him confused like me and the confused answers complicated his tongue, a slave... was that reasonable? The destruction of “Hamout” had been done by a slave’s hand? I did not believe that!!

He jumped angrily:

“I’m your Lord... don’t say “a slave”! or I’ll separate your skin to your blood; and damn you with my woe, strength and mighty turning you to a still corpse!!”

“I know you’re mighty and capable of discontent; and he who owns your heart, it will be easy for him because you’re heartless”

“I know you’ll squat tomorrow countless children, or maybe you’ve counted them; and you’ve estimat-

ed a car bomb attack near an elementary school or a kindergarten.

You've become a vampire due to too much blood you've seen."

He pointed at me with his thumb; I feared him because the thumb meant a sign of death:

"You're weaker and smaller to know, I'm a master and I have brothers who are masters like me; but we're all obey the Lord of our bounty and never disobey his orders."

"Your Lord of bounty is (Jalil) "The Dignified", isn't he?"

"Yes, (Jalil)."

"O my Lord, What's this ghost whose humanity is doubted, What did I do to myself when I allowed him to enter my house; but anyway, he was to enter it by himself, I did not even invite him."

He re-pointed to me:

"Don't be delirious; I know your delirium and what's going on in your mind, prepare to us the supper meal. I'll not be late, I'll be back soon."

He got out with the most conceit of himself. He was tall... very tall, willowy, atrophic abdomen and beautiful... His eyes muted me when I just looked at them; he had a look which penetrated bodies and hearts and withdrew the skin off the bones.

I replied:

“Yes... Yes, my friend, I’ll prepare a delicious meal of meat and rice, I know you like meat.”

I retreated to my isolation in the kitchen preparing myself for “Aziz’s” arrival, so I switch on the television on the news bulletin... An event about arresting an armed gang having explosives penetrated my ear, the film showed young men of around eighteen years old and the gang leader with a beard of about forty years old... the youngest of them admitted how they were seduced by dollars at the beginning, but after their submission to him, he started to give one hundred dollars and sometimes fifty dollars for each head they slayed... and he said we were obliged to accept because if we refused, we would have our

heads beheaded... He tricked us with courtesy and taking opportunity of our destitution at the beginning. He used to start with sweet talk until his power, intentions and tricks became stronger and wider.

“Only cowards trick the others; and only people like them steal others.”

I remembered my friend “Aziz” while I was listening to that poor young man.

I cooked rice, fried meat and continued listening but suddenly the announcer announced breaking news cutting the rest of the bulletin:

(An armed group stormed the central bank in the capital of “Hamout” and the whole treasury was stolen. The group also shot the bank employees even the guards).

That news muted me and I froze in my place, I forgot the food on fire, I did not pay attention, but the smell of the burned meat made me return to my sense.

That was the most proven proof on another thumbprint... a print set the hands of the robbers

and killers free; and to make the bare floor tiles mattresses of the parents of children and the waiting wives who were waiting for the first day of the month salaries to pay the housing fares and to buy sustenance.

(6)

He should be frank with me today; I would not let him flee with his bitter silence or getting out without permission. I wanted him to explain clearly to me whether he was enemy to the human race or tender to them... and his Lord" Jalil" as he had told me... was his Lord domesticated with the souls in such savagery as if never happened. These creatures did not live to breed, love, beget and experience all tracks of life just to be introduced to him by (Aziz) as a sacred drink to subside his thirst.

He ought to disclose the secret of the sudden glass drunk by every human being during his unknown journey.

I would ask him about the beginning of creation to this moment, I would dare ask him to take me the greatest end... It might be his own end... He should tell me about the secret of vanishing and nothingness.

(Aziz) entered without knocking at the door, it was his habit; the habit of the ghosts and the jinn was to

break through the barriers. He asked about the supper meal but I did not answer that the supper was burned; and I had to fetch a ready meal from any nearby restaurant.

I silenced for a moment, and then I asked him:

“Do you want water?”

He answered cautious of ambiguity of his answer:

“Thanks, I’ve drunk before I came here to you.”

I put on my clothes and brought money enough for two meals, I took permission from him and got out. At the threshold of the house, I remembered whether he preferred juice or ice but I was surprised with his voice afar:

“Thanks. I don’t want any ice or juice.”

He knew what were in the consciences and souls... yes, I knew that ghosts pick up quickly the notions and they realized them before uttering or applying them.

I ordered two meals standing by the door of the restaurant waiting for preparing my order.

At the door, I watched the pedestrians' faces; some of them pinned out hopes on tomorrow, others were crept by despair which left grey dye on them... Children were the God's stars on the ground... a light waft freshened my soul; a madman passed yelling and denoting with his hands to unknown things, someone saw him and talked to him alone. The most moderate things that sober man with blue jacket sitting in the restaurant. While he was eating, his eyes broke through the glass searching for a passing svelte body... He stood up for allowing a coquette young lady to pass and then he wiped his lips froth.

I took the two meals and turned back to the house.

After the end, thinking of returning irked me; and the notion of knowing of the heart of the ghost haunted me.

We ate the food silently as it was our habit when we met. He knew well that I had hundreds of questions; and he did not try even for once to take in hand to their answers... He terribly used to control

his emotions; he also tried to exclude cognitive domain between me and him... I tried hard to break through that with all my power; I displaced silent domain while a lot of things were growing in my chest:

“Brother (Aziz), who are you?”

“I’m the ghost.”

He said that around a hidden smile in his chest.

“Do you live alone with your Lord “Jalil”?”

-“No, we’re many and all of us are under his service and obedience.”

-“Does every one of you have a special job? What’s the shape of service and obedience?”

-“Don’t interfere in something which is none of your business.”

-‘It’s my business!! And it’s in the depth of what I mean and want.”

His voice became coarse and bored. I feared his coming out so that I kept silence. He put his hand on my hand changing his voice accent:

“My friend, Mohammad, you don’t know what the ghosts know or comprehend their deeds because any one of you in “Hamout” is limited- sighted and limited-minded.”

“How..? Explain more so that I can get closer to your way of understanding things.”

“our conviction is different from you, our vision is so different... nights, dusks, mornings and days... all of them are bridges you walk on in weakness, joy, sadness, happiness, pain, approaching and parting... maybe you are massages to others who come after you as you inherited the massages of those who proceeded you.”

I sat listening with all my soul, my heart and my hearing paying all my efforts to decode his ambiguous speech. I tried all my best to cling even in the details; and the silence between a speech and another speech.

After a short time, he asked me:

“What do you want from me? What can I explain to you? What do you want me to tell you about?”

Although I had many ideas, they disappeared from my head. Joy, sadness and all the diodes which life usually depended on and considered them the existence pillars.

I saw men and faces, brave eyes and other coward eyes, falling guilty hands and other hands like them but fingerless... beside me, there were cut roses and other roses budded... defeat and wars, victories and loses, guns and revolutions, loud voices and low voices, old songs of victory and toot warned banshee.

Many people passed that moment... My tongue dare not move itself, did (Aziz) mute me in order not to ask about false peace which we hoped in the candles of the priests, saints, religion scholars and turbans which soaked us in virtue!!

Were those bluffers or real people?

Many, many people were kidnapped at the sight of my eyes... human bullfighting... human pigs, moderation and decadence. I hoped many words come out of my throat whose voice became coarse.

(Aziz) stood surprised of my miserable situation; I realized well that a scream of his could turn me into a rug... but he had mercy on me... He was about to leave but I pulled his long rope begging him to sit down.

He responded positively to my begging and he sat looking at me:

“ I’ve never seen a human being deserving pity but what you are on now... are you afraid of me? ... of my anger? We’re friends now. So what’s for fear?

Ask me what you want, I have a duty I shall complete it so I’ll be absent for one or two days.”

I stuck by his robe and begged him not to be absent away from me; my admiration of his speech increased and became part of me:

“I beg you... my happiness is in your stay with me, as you can see, I live alone... I have no family, even the cats have left”

“I won’t be long... I have a job there; and an important meeting with my Lord (Jalil)... I’ll be back

as soon as we end up the meeting... don't worry I'll stay with you."

"Will you speak frankly to me if I ask you any question?"

"We don't know anything else; exaggeration, lie, and disguising in other skins and faces else than ours. These are the nature of "Hamout" people but no our nature."

"Do you mean the ghosts' nature?"

He laughed mocking of the word "ghosts". He wrapped his rope round himself and disappeared in a jiffy.

It was dawn and I did not wish to go out of the house. I expected that when I went to bed, a snooze would take me; but sleeping was hard and impossible. I tried to inspect "Hamout" houses in my imagination and which of them had not been touched by the death of the previous war... and which of them had been touched and suffered bitter agony... in my journey, I stole the love of "Farida", our neighbor of her cousin; and their long waiting and loving each other since their childhood.

Painfully, I remembered my fear of them if the thumbprint touched them and they did not taste the lovely fruit of that violent love, which many people knew and blessed for its chastity and purity... all of those who knew them witnessed these of them.

Among the noise of the carts and the hawkers... between its light and its night, the city unified previously with the dark mourning color after a destructive war which ate everybody and everything... Some young men remained imploring their moment embracing which might give them some hope and peace of mind... Most parents of young men had fears of their tomorrows and from converting life to a second hell.

Thoughts fell on my heart like the falling of snow... remembering had a bitter taste with dark warmth... memories lent its head on my chest and perched on it.

When I decided to visit my sister, the sadness smiled with the pride that asked forgiveness of its Lord... fresh pain disappeared behind funeral melody... moons came out their caves and colluded with the memory.

Death mustiness wiped my soul... it communicated with my journey and decision to see her and her husband... a long time passed since I talked to her, or see her five children.

I was not wrong when I determined that. I took out some money that I had hidden, for rainy day from my bag... I took two hundred dinars to buy some staff which my sister and her sons usually liked.

In the bus directing south, I heard the passengers whispering fearfully about new news... about new inevitable deaths and very near war.

They were whispering about the previous victories and their new inheritance.

From the crowd, a bearded brownish man shouted:

“ My Lord, have mercy on us; Wars have a great appetite to our children. Is it a must for us, we: sons of loser mother, constant consolations? We bear the results of recklessness of the great leaders and the commotion of the castrated leaders?

Your kindness, O Lord!! Are these signs or the end of the world?... only for us?"

His wife silenced him putting her hand on his mouth fearing of spies' and mass killers' raid... he stroke his mouth with his hand with all his strength and answered her;

" Haa... I'm mute!!'

He kept silence for a while then he cried again:

"The key is lost... the mouths' keys are lost... and they become over staffed with silence; and this is the secret of the great calamity.

His wife gave him a glass of water to calm down and ensconce him; her eyes went round the faces fearfully, counting the minutes to arrive... and looking at the trees from the bus window counting them in a low voice... I heard her counting; I felt isolation breaking through her soul.

After some moments, our eyes met and broke through the barrier of time, she uttered without previous acquaintance of her:

“ By God, my brother... I’ve lost three young men; now I’ve none but one of seventeen years old... I’m terrified that I might lose him, too. If he died, I would lose both of my son and my husband. My husband had a brain clot left him with his right side hemiplegia; and he hardly recovered of that...”

Then she whispered:

“Have you heard of new “Hamout” War? It will be directed to the south this time...”

She corrected her fault;

“A madman is the person who opens his mouth.”

Then silence ate all the mouths.

I became very terrified about my sister. Rips, thought and heart-broken, I knocked at her door in a withered day the same as my heart now... full of fear and fire, worry amidst darkness... I tried again to knock at the door because time was still in its darkness... I heard voice getting down from the house roof:

“Yes, I’ll open the door, who are you?”

When she heard my voice, a voice came out of her like the singing of the mothers and she hastened joyfully getting down the stairs bare-footed... I heard the sound of her feet as if they were clapping.

With the glimmer of the light, I saw a clear thumb at the corner of the door but I did not know then it was a crazy sign... or approaching to the birth of death that took revenge of a life that saying prayers for its survival and curing without punishment.

She hugged me tightly and her tears were flowing from her eyes... I kissed her on her forehead and my eyes were on the other nearby houses, I saw shadows passing quickly or ghosts stepping quickly toward the other houses and printing... I could not enter having the pretext for my tears in order to prolong looking and my sister called her sons to get up of their beds in a loud voice:

“Your uncle has arrived... come on... call your father with you and get down from the roof.”

We stuck with love, kisses and the call of brotherhood. My sister prepared breakfast and joy filled her face and heart.

How much I was stupid because I did not understand the secret of the thumbs and their breaking through our dreams while they were in the cradle.

After drinking tea, I asked my brother –in-law to tour the city.

At the threshold, I glanced a person passing quickly but I did not recognized his features, he was like a leafless tree in a silent fall... the city seemed as if it had navigated in a boat of darkness, misery and waiting.

I stayed for a whole week with them because transportation broke down and traffic banned. Talking and inquiry about the reason also banned.

No need for “Hamout” to know the reason because reasons were predetermined by their conceit leaders who were frail and inner- defeated dominating by means of the executioner’s whip; expressing their fears and escaping from that by blood scenes!!

They might conspire with the ghosts; and agreed to create events of bereavement... they went with

their fading hollow toward taking of lives proving their madness as a compelling document of their shortages.

The deficient men did their best to punish the others and dropping their humanity and their right of it.

Thus, they liberated themselves from their inner ghosts and devils who were vampires.

Greedy darkness was in their hearts to the shamelessness of death... their rusted continuance was usually fed on the others saliva... young men and old men, children and women.

I threw up my thoughts defect, wounds hidden inside the chests which we extracted unawares; and my eyes remained gazing in the roofs inquiring the seconds of loss, toiling heavily to hunt a fleeting nap.

The predetermined would happen if we let out its occurrence, it would unveil and take place slowly... in a year or several years... it did not matter... what happened had happened... and what occurred in a blink of an eye, it would occur.

(7)

After a week, the underworld celebrated our young sons who became a fresh banquet for them and for the worms which were experts in making mellowed wine of the skeletons and decomposing flesh... constant brilliance of attending and absence.

Thus, I returned to my house defeated with loss; and the image of my sister's face tingling like needles in my whole body.

Lottery game... I extended my hand to buy it after I got down of the bus in order to present it to my brother in law. I wrapped it hoping a fortune without hunger; a fortune could protect him of needs and the future hunger but a sudden defect hindered his hopes.

In my wondering and preoccupation of seeing fingerprints, I did not deliver it to him... the lottery increased giving to him and it threw the death net on his family.

Death never misses its aims. When it is empty-handed, it fills it in a glance, and it never hesitates doing that. I thought things moderated to him alone is hand to unknown things preparing my order. I got out to read the meal.

Here I saw it as a non-lotto card, I tore it and threw it down as trash of shops which issued its rule against us with crowning the kings of darkness.

Everything in the room was gazing at me even at the sheets and continuing gazing and its looks ran down like hungry water.

How could water become hungry or thirsty? And that was another secret which I ought to discover amidst collective thirst and hunger haunted «Hamout».

Life in «Hamout» became a hanging robe around our necks and snakes' poisons. If we had an enemy, «Hamout» would be the greatest enemy. The enemy called us to demolish the principles and to dominate strong people over weak people, rich people over

poor people, scammers over faithful people and the damn over the tolerance.

That was «Hamout», the ugliest scene which did not submit but for grievances... these grievances were distributed equally according to people exhaustion and endurance in revenge against each other... there was no right written down in the sharia and the law but except the noble mistake low... The right was for the noblest in achieving grateful hatred; and the best for achieving the right thing of the shining of killing and its glittering to atone for the sins and barren ethics to the extent that the liar turned to be the lover's friend and a friend of himself; and the unjust one could not forget a right demander, therefore, he threw many stones, bombs and bomb cars to achieve his ends...

We became aware of «Hamout»... we were afraid of the ground we stood on caring of death and atoning of the guilt of «our fear of it»... it overpowered on us the meanest creatures of God; it found for them their own justice and their own law.

It overpowered unjust people on some of them to make them eat each other.

The chairs were full of dirt and poisons. There were no relations between their owners and the honor and integrity... the ghost of crime prevailed over all people; and talking about the original ghost became just a word said on ordinary occasions...

But I was on constant connection with him, he used to come to my house whenever he wanted, not only when I called him... sometimes he seemed to have dusky features and angry, and sometimes tranquility prevailed his face.

On quietness of a moon night, he entered and asked cold water. He sat in a distant corner of my bed room full of burdens; then he raised his sight at me:

«People of «Hamout» became snakes, their only interest was money and how to reach it... their system became «end justifies the means».

My soul disgusted of these men... I gave them a period of time so that they might wake up to their

consciousness... but there was no use... I wished illnesses and madness, for them.

But illness feared them as it seemed to be!!

I collected some strength because I used to experience weakness before his prestige:

«But you overpower diseases over them and over the righteous and weak people who had no money for treatment.»

«Those people were fated for that; their fate was not a punishment for a crime or theft.»

I said to myself it was time to ask him about his own attitudes:

«We are friends, aren't we?»

Surprised, he answered me:

«Is there any doubt in that, my friend?»

«Then... tell me about your weakness and strength moments, your pain and joy, I want to know you well?»

«Where do you want me to start, my friend?»

I said to him:

« I will let for you choice freedom... but what I care for very much is talking about your weakness moments and your rebel against tour Lord... then... I've forgotten to ask you about the meeting and your absence for ten days away from me... «

He said:

«The world is full of invitation and we've got an invitation for a meal... so I had to attend responding to Mr.(Jalil)... We stayed some days there. When we got back, we had settled some delayed things.»

«Do you know, Mohammad... «Hamout» is crowded by fierce intruders who corrupted life and beauty in it; and they must get out of it.»

I asked him:

«How...?»

He replied me as he continued his talk:

«Let alone this «How..?» until it's time for it; tell me if we will start now?»

I sat down cross-legged on the ground; and I was full of passion and love for knowledge:

«Yes, sir. Say what you like.»

«The world called me to take their eternal life. To me, it makes no difference between this and that but in the way of arrival... I'm a soldier like a warrior in a battle; I mean I'm a commanded servant. And for too many talks of people about me, disparaging me and their extreme fear of my presence, I thought of creating a way which made them forget me on the battle hour; and not mentioning my name on their tongues... to pity them and their fear of me.

«If I appear before them in my real shape, they all will die in a second... and you too when I appeared before you in a shape of man for mercy for you.»

«Old and modern statuses were many because my life had no contentment or quietness and peaceful of mind... All of you slept and your eyes used to

close peacefully and to get rest in a second... but as for me, I'm in a spiral passing all the universal seconds... My duty obliged me to do so... and all of us ought to do so.

I was surprised of the words (all of us):

«All of you?! How many people are you?!»

«Many... We are many with blind obedience to our Lord; and if we win his content that will mean our stay and continuation beside Him... our stay is inevitable of his content and his content is in his satiety... his banquets do not stop or quite around the seconds so that you find us hasten to achieve that.

Our government is different from your government in «Hamout»... you, every now and then, a man of you changes his convictions, now he has principles... but after two days and however the interest requires, he will be, and soon he replaces his principles with what is new on the arena.

We are the sons of one family, obedience and one principle. My friend, high places are unreachable by the insects.»

«... the insects? Do you describe us, the humans, as insects?»

He laughed loudly until I heard the room walls rattling like mashed ribs.

«You're heart-callous, I've never seen like you all my life.»

«I'm strong; I never weaken even with the nearest friend or lover to me... I break through him and enter his body... my Lord ordered me to implement this great mission which all my colleagues were unable to do or they were weak and frail.

«Then... You've never wept of the scene of an innocent little girl or handicapped boy, or... «

He interrupted me:

«Children are my great calamity... their soft bodies are my loss before myself, their faces are immersed in my heart like a hair in dough; and I have to extract it responding to the duty.

But what you see as evil to them, we see that it's good for them... based on the good, their bodies dissolve among my fingers obediently.»

Fortunately, I was strong that night and ready to face him:

«It's the satanic emptiness, Mr. (Aziz). You're wide-range resourceful and savvy, with a lot of justification to can up your convictions by an illusion which you believe in order to continue in your tyranny... what power do you make up during your contemplation of the crucified unjustly and those who are beheaded?»

«Will other devils remain outdoors then enjoy and feel extreme pleasure of the scene?»

«I don't know what creatures you are... you are nothing but a slave and a slave satisfied and servile with his situation though your fingers experience tyranny and smother life but you're still slaves...»

I intended to provoke him to lead him to talk and to stop his pretending strength and tyranny... I saw him soaking in sweat and his cheeks blushed... I initiated to ask him:

«Do the devils and ghosts sweat, sir?»

«How many times does your body sweat, your consciousness hurt, feel weakness and your heart collapse? Will you tell me?»

A half smile appeared on his face urged him to mock me:

«Numbers are just numbers, like the numbers : three, ten, weeks and years... are just smoke passing, so I drive them out in a finger referring, I may not use my fingers, one blow and everything is over.»

«How conceited you are!! You're really a big conceited person... you're a conceited lost person and a slave... I have bity on you, and I recommend you to gain your freedom out of slavery... Be yourself even for one time and get out of your prison... then tell your Lord about your purpose.

Can you be a judge for your deeds?

Can you take revenge of what you are ordered to do?

Where are you of all these?

Your devils and your ghosts must have choice, too... Then I don't believe of what you said... who knows where you go or pretend to be invited to hold a meeting with (Jalil)... (Jalil) may be made of your fears and suppositions to know the greatest secrets and mastering over them.»

“We increase fear of you in «Hamout», whenever you get higher and older. Maybe people in it choose your name to know you... who knows...It's a very confused thing... you're a big forest. One day will come and you'll burn, and terminate yourself by yourself.»

He bemoaned deeply... He sighed more deeply and stood up:

«Yes... really, at the end, I'm the one will who terminate myself... I kill myself for him to remain.»

«Who do you mean?»

«Forget it... I'll lead you there one day, I'll break through the time to show that hour and then bring you back.

Tomorrow we'll start talking about my days... is this satisfactory for you?»

I smiled confirming agreeing and felt I achieved my purpose.

Then I implored to him to take me to my hour and show me its shape.

He left me encroach in my isolation and got out but he resumed saying:

«I'll not be long»

A nice day passed with him, I made him come closer to me... I followed up some dew drops exhausted by sunrise so that they ran at a green leave edges... then they were followed by other drops... Birds flew up on the high branches of the mulberry tree. Children were converted to lovely birds playing in the streets... Innocence spread like fantastic perfume that fell down its greenness over leafless trees so that it increased melting with the tree sap to communicate with life.

(8)

People used to fear of mentioning the ghost so that they could clean out their thoughts from him, and spray perfume of excuses which became unknown to them.

“Hamout” people flooded like a river with fearing breath in its running; that was what children used to do although childhood pushed in their childish veins harmonizing with a sunny day.

In my birth certificate, there was mentioned my father’s name who I did not see. I suffered a lot to know how children used to play and have fun in their father’s laps... the memory of my mother circled over my head and took me to her long suffering in bringing me up and availing what was enough to eat in a humble life.

At those doors, I stood for a long time with her stumbling in our hopes and we dreamed... we

dreamed of what we did not have right to dream of or to reach to even in a passing idea.

All things became impossible.

Jailers' numbers increased day after day, and "Hamout" was a raging sea, no ship nor savior but leaving it and directing oneself to another unknown.

Shapes increased and became numerous and the result was one until the names of all people became "weird"... weird in the laps of "Hamout", weird outside it, with it and inside it... the patch widened to become a fresh language in the news bulletins.

Which escape did they aim when the ship became complete hardship for them? Those souls shielded with the waves of the raging sea... expecting that they would find pulses in the sea salt.

I confirmed that all people who read the news had his soul melted in tears because the more deporting meant the more of the wildness of that promised moment for "Hamout" people.

The news of the drowning people of the ship shocked like a thunderbolt on my heart. I imagined their eyes when they paid farewell to their dearest lovers; and they inhaled the last perfume of their homeland... I felt their last breaths breaking through my ribs... and the sea swallowed more of “Hamout” young men.

I could no longer follow up TV because every time it threw his lights on us, it would reveal a friend's or a relative's images who lied in spans of soil after some accidents... or misled footsteps in some spots of expatriation.

Every day, I walked around in unimportant roads... and other crowded roads discovering the relationships between humans.

Their deaths were troubled in the time that his days became like a going off bell.

How did “Hamout” convert to a bell and it was the veins of blueness and greenness?

No substitute for the sea but swallowing its people in order to become a banquet for the sea sharks.

We stayed in land which contained two contradictions from its end to its other end; it became cities of tinsplate, we used to live in tinsplate in hot weather and in winter.

I did not know whether ghosts got married, begot babies and celebrated their weddings and their breed or they were only of our illusion?

“We are the devils of the presence. We celebrate in all tracks of life and with all its colors, pleasures and sadness. We do not resemble them certainly; but when he returns tonight, I’ll make sure of the idea which comes to my mind now.”

There was no rumor in the city about a ghost of a child or a woman; therefore all of the ghosts were male!

We tried to beautify dreams in “Hamout” but it did not like so that it made fun by pulling life day

after day... and it provoked our certainty with an alleged spring.

We dreamed with thousand pleasures and a pleasure that entered our hearts... but they separated from us like a being that separated off him.

The being of us bears two inside him... Or ten beings argued so that they could multiply the number lest we remained one!!

Pain and suffering doubled but glamor never doubled... anger exasperated but no sweet quietness sneaked to us.

People in "Hamout" overpowered and wreaked havoc in their souls before the others... They remained feeling inferior needing a person to bow for... bow for his tyranny respectably.

Unsatisfied and satisfied bowing, they sought power superior to them so that they resorted to religion scholars to learn new fears and lovely slavery from them.

Collective oppression experienced by their rulers forced them to a different bowing... why did their necks bow? Why did they exclaim in the streets meaning free will?

Freedom and a slave? How did they explain rehabilitation their masked thoughts?

All these surprised me especially in discussing “Hamout” intellectuals whose thoughts were poisoned or, in other words, they ended up to believe in ghosts spread in “Hamout” as an absolute belief as if they were sacred postulates that were made of their fears.

They were accustomed to fear and slavery so that they created freak means made them closer to the great in their souls; and they were guided to superstitions which after them magic and sorcery spread as well as crawling on their knees to get closer to saint tombs demanding fulfilling their wishes through deaf slavery.

Suspensions and doubts hovered around the ghosts; and arguments were raised about their reality and doubting them.

It was the human nature that they used to need a great being to raise them up from their setbacks. They used to demand the powerful to gloss over their weakness... so they used to imagine many shapes of the ghosts until many people described them as devils.

But my friend “Aziz” did not care of their chit-chats, He did not care for jamming which they spread among them to understand... and they would not understand... because they did not understand each other; therefore, how did they understand the ghosts?

The neighbor did not reach the depth of his neighbor; therefore how did he reach the depth of (Aziz)?

(Aziz) did not disappear for a long time but he was absent only for moments which became an aeon.

When he entered, I smelled warm blood scent in his clothes. And while I was listening to his panting breaths, he bemoaned deeply and blew out air which was about to hit me at the wall due to its power.

“What’s wrong with you (Aziz)?”

He amended his sitting:

“The scene was so... so painful. Five children were going to their school; they became baits for rotten consciousness and baits for fire.

Their bodies were torn out due to a bomb-bicycle parked at the street side.

Wow... What a thoughtless manhood did that!!!

“Are you terrified, (Aziz)?”

“No... I never know fear... But some soft fresh fingers fell in my lap while I was crossing to the other road”

“Where have you put your thumbprint, then?”

“It was eaten by the fires, wasn’t it?”

“Forget this... We will start a journey together... close your eyes.”

I closed my eyes submitted to his voice. My body was blown by a storm, air vortex and sounds I did not know them before, shook it violently. I tried to open one of my eyes but the vortex scene as it circled around the green trees terrified me. Therefore, I retreated to hide my sight between closed eyelashes.

I heard him say:

“Open your eyes”

Surprised, I opened them to their ends:

“Where are we, (Aziz)?”

“Don’t ask... Only listen to see who you are” He said.

There was a dense forest and no one was there but two young men talking to each other. One of them seemed pious and his features silence had piety and tranquility. The other young man embodied in him all evil features.

The evil one was hitting his brother and quarreling with him. Malice overcame him although his brother did not hurt him. In contrast, he tried to ease his evil:

“Don’t let the survival illusion take you away, my brother. Overcome yourself and kill the evil in your soul.”

That was what the noble brother said to his brother; and he asked him not to submit to his soul passion and its evil but he did not respond... His soul seduced him and made him knit the threads of grudges against his brother. So he pushed him from the highest hill. His brother tried to hold some big tree branches to avoid falling. But his brother pushed him again until he fell to the ground motionless!!

Fear grew greater in his soul: how would he meet his father and what would he say to him? He shook his brother so that he might wake up; but death was more powerful than him... He started to pull him to many places confused by his deed... among the fruit

and dried trees, he misled the way... repentance crept to his heart and soul... his trick exhausted... What should he do with his brother's corpse? He did not know death yet and he did not know its rituals. In the meantime, a raven landed from the sky holding a dead raven in its beak... the first raven made a hole in the ground and started to hurl the soil on the dead raven until it disappeared.

Warning sounds were hovering around him. His consciousness might wake up and employed these sounds to show him his deed... He took the raven as a role model. Therefore, he started to do the same the raven had done; he made a hole for his brother and hurl soil on him.

I was with (Aziz) parking beside one big tree. Suddenly, we were blown by wind which shook the place violently. I closed my eyes fearing of developing blindness. Then, quietness and silence startled us. I opened my eyes like a new-born baby who had already recognize life... all of the sudden, I was sit-

ting with (Aziz) in my house and (Aziz), with all his known quietness, was looking at my pale face.

“Where were we? Who were these two brothers?”

“They were from your origin... your good and evil.

I moved you to the universal evil, your original root; so don't be surprised what you are on today.”

An idea about his fingerprint came to my mind:

“Did you let your thumbprint there... then where to?”

“Yes, I did. I left it in the soul of the killer.”

“What is the guilt of the killed brother?”

“It was the best death.”

“The best?!!”

“Yes, ... the best... it was the decent end to be won.”

“Which winning... Which decent winning ... you're raving, ghost... did death have grades, too? Woe of you and from your weird manners!!”

He said:

“And there is the end of foolishness decent for the fools. They died by the hands of those who are

more foolish than them. Blood is never washed out but in blood.”

“That means we are expiation of the guilt of those who preceded us but this is the injustice itself.”

Are we the most fitting for banquet expiation of the sins which we did not commit?

Let the wrestlers fight and kill each other but what was the guilt of the innocents?

What would the coming generation be after the black gold stained everything and pollute life?

“Calm down, my human brother... Rulers of higher thrones will come to issue orders of hunger and death of needing, hot weather and displacement.

That means that no creature will mention that they were banquet atoning the others’ sins... is it clear or should I explain more?”

I twisted my lips deprecatingly:

“Yes, it’s clear... we are in a trap from maximums to maximums.”

(9)

I never saw him naked any day but he made me feel naked beside him. His power and self-confidence led me to that... when he pointed to me; I used to feel that water would flood from his fingers... I did not know exactly how my shape would be... He came to meet my repeated invitation to him.

It was a strange friendship between a human and a ghost... but it is different now... he connected with me and I liked him.

We never parted each other; if he was late for a minute after his appointment, I would become crazy... although he used to commit himself to his appointment in a so amazing accurately... we, I meant "Hamout" people, did not keep time and our appointments. The jinn were more faithful and used to keep their word than we were... they even used to respect themselves more than we did.

I learned a lot from him. He even explained a lot of things which were absent from me or my imagination never believed them.

One day, I said to him:

“I swear with our brotherly relationship, I will never let you down after this day... “

He laughed... and silenced and repeated the times between silence and laughter:

“Don’t swear, please... Your time is the time of false oath... you let it down in seconds... and you swear by religion, by God and by honor and by divorcing your wives; the man of you never owns manhood.”

I did not argue him because he put his hand on our new truth; we were a scar on the face of humanity... “Hamout” people were a black spot on the beauty’s cheek.

One night, He woke up of his waking sleeping. He looked at himself in a mirror hung on the wall... He crumped grumblingly and he turned back to bed I asked him about his speechlessness:

“What’s the matter, my intimate friend? Have you found in the mirror anything annoying?”

“Yes,... what reflected in it was not my face, I can’t accept the shape of a human... What will my friend there say if they see me now? Sure, they will mock of me.”

“What are the shapes of your friends, my dearest (Aziz)?”

“What happened to me? Why I obey Mohammad to the extent of deep love?”

That was what he was saying to himself; and that made me fear that he might leave at the beginning of the knowledge way... I did not reach yet to his flaws and rejection of responsibility appointed to him... he was still vague to me...

He was secretive and spoke very little.

One day, I would jump to his back and beg him to kick off where he wanted... I would leave for him the freedom to choose place and time... It was evident that his silence dated back to the first creation.

But what was running in my mind then was: Was all these just human suppositions as some philosophers claimed about the fear of the humans and his need for a great and mighty one to hide his flaws, weakness and disability toward understanding nature and creativity?

I did not think... the ghost-man used to live with me eating, drinking, sleeping, arguing, mocking and laughing loudly... that meant that he was inescapable real and true.

Was nature a supposition? ... Impossible... supposed ones could not create the ghost represented before me... He listened and knew what was running in my mind then, and smiled secretly... yes, that was very clear because he used to hide a light smile by sipping potato and mushroom soup which I prepared to him before a while; I loved him a lot so that he always used to order that soup from me.

The days passed quickly and I was listening to him and to the most accurate details of his speech, the

orders and the quickness of their execution and submission to them... frequently, I found him unsatisfied at all because he remembered them reluctantly and under responsibility feeling toward his consciousness, heart and feelings.

I concluded that he refused in his inner soul that feature and hoped his Lord make him getting rid of them... choosing him due to his being the strongest and the best for his mission made him blameworthy every second of all creatures.

He emptied all the soup pot... He looked at me inquiring:

“Mohammad... Don’t you buy today’s newspaper?”

“Yes, sir. I’ve bought it but it warns unknown foreboding up till now. Due to this, you see me gazing at TV. “Hamout” is invaded by mice. I’m afraid of outbreak of plague.”

“What a shame!! Mice invading!!! Woe unto you, “Hamout”, to this extent your soul has become

cheap to you so that you allow to the mice to wreaking havoc in you.”

The hoodoo mirror passed in front of me... also ravens passed, the news announced the fall of a fetish and the rising of other fetishes of the new era throne.

A swamp set down and another swamp replaced it bleeding the land of “Hamout” and full it if bloody justice... the lady of pride and water was raped by someone who had no water in his face nor had he any atom of honor on his forehead.

Those who were submitted to the darkness of their previous masters and supported them with their ten fingerprints became masters over their volcanoes with closed eyes for the Great Masters... the Masters of misguidance and embedding identity.

Due to their ignorance and reactionary backwardness, they took back “Hamout” to the Stone Age... to the era of the jungle... and to the Wrong mec-

ca direction where everything converted to sacred adultery.

They turned things lawful or unlawful for reasons or without reasons for harvesting the necks and to terrorism... these seemed as features of all those who sought to terrify people as before in order to cover their own ugliness and weakness.

Yesterday... Killing was collective namely sectarian and according to their classes. Today, killed people became disobedient and godless... they had to announce the Law of burning of the godless people... they became the owners of Allah's revenge... I did not know what Allah might take revenge of under their names... from weak, poor and simple people!!

The new masters' intelligence agents created different shapes of submitted people to them who were paid fees as buildings and credits in the international banks... as well as the luxurious palaces specialized for their shameless deeds... for that, they wore turbans in order to make their nakedness

and anomaly sacred... and “Hamout” people ought to obey and be loyal.

Corrupted persons became masters, the idiots became imams, the malicious persons became leaders, the killers became pious... and the anomalies became chiefs.

The hired followers collected according to each one’s group; and what they were belonged to became backward so that people felt naked and hungry.

The streets devoured their bare-footed sons, drudgers and lost women. The ground became holes full of bores and corruption which they created their shapes and making. Their smell was like the smell of a mouth of a drunkard who had eaten garlic and onion and had drunk a glass full of unknown swamp stink.

Those who departed before and the deportees came back to “Hamout” fancying a homeland not submitted to bargaining... they were surprised with countless and numberless bargains.

They found the homeland as an exile... They found that original exile difficult, so they re-departed to their branch exile.

They were sent there from their countries where they sheltered previously; and they were enlisted for their concepts and teachings...

Places pluralized of “there” as the number of those who were sent and enlisted pluralized in order to spread disorder.

All of them were ready to be formed according to commands and reality requirements planned for them. So shaved-bearded people became

bearded ones, unveiled women became veiled women, non-turban-headed persons became turban-headed ones to brew for themselves as followers of him, backstreet guys, adultery men and ex-prisoners of murder, theft and shameful deeds were unmatched innovations to what they deserved of miserable democracy.

Therefore, “Hamout” turned to be a cave or a cowshed.

Those who came from the barbaric desert found in the cowshed shelter for them due to their backwardness... in executing their masters’ commands, they started to abuse people using the ugliest kinds of sufferings claiming their right to do that... It was the religion of the secret police and the desert which made them in the front lest those with barbaric turbans took a different track and imposed it on “Hamout”.

It was a bullring... a turbaned bull and a desert fat bull who speared his hooves in the oil and lavished dollars without scales to those whose consciousness and greediness mastered the spreading of hunger, poverty and homelessness... another residents entered “Hamout” and appropriated everything even dreams while people of enlightened thought did not found any doors to enter to eliminate the power of the throne; therefore they stayed in the laps of terror and exile inside and outside the homeland. They

were departed forcedly and the rest of them remained under panic of authority hidden under the curtain of religion so that repression could be lawful and legal.

They were overeaten up to smothering and their bellies grew bigger

And slouched; and their buildings, hotels and palaces out of ‘Hamout’ got bigger... they permitted for themselves what they forebode the others to get and consequently, they swelled.

Those who put their hands in the hands of the enemies of “Hamout” became masters of the city; and they earned in return of their treasury that they became leaders who got the greatest shares of everything.

The black smoke of their malignant hearts rose to the highness of “Hamout” airs... and their hidden schemes and financing the hired killers also spread in the city. They also spread their raging winds so that no one of “Hamout” sons could breathe.

Yes, there was air but it was the air poisoned by adultery and prostitution

That had neither manhood nor ethics.

What walls of the houses which were wet with the viscous saliva of the lizards!! and what eyes of the bereaved and the deprived of the heaven sympathy for a rain drop!!

When (Aziz) saw me raving, he would turn to silence... He even muted his breaths listening to the glowing of my lips.

I asked myself and directed my sight to him so that he might answer:

"I feel as if I were drinking glue and chewing my gargle!!

"Don't you feel disability like me before this danger which threatens "Hamout"?"

"It is very sorry that among them persons who have struggled, imprisoned and suffered."

"Who do you mean?"

“Your present masters... they are the most dangerous enemies of all ordinary people... hatreds and grudges were planted in their souls until Satan grew greater and huger in their inner souls.... Now it’s the turn of their Satan to take his right.

“... to take his right from the people... from the armless people?”

“Yes, from the armless people; for the devils used to choose the frail person and attack him to start wrestling with them on the account of the armless and frail persons... those who paid at the wrestling ring

... or say enter-ticket to the ring.”

“... and the turbaned people; what do you call them, (Aziz)?”

“They are prisoners chained in handcuffs and false commandments... in delusive speeches, most of them are politicalized... whereas original ones are isolated. They have not participated in the wrestling... they set back toward themselves pitying

what's happening; they kept silence... it was considered the silence of the disabled and not the silence of the wise men... for those, the massacre has appeared and they have not wished to participate in it.

Prepare yourself... tonight, we'll make trip. I've got bored neighboring you here!!

I don't know any hatred. Otherwise, I was to hate you to the doomsday!!

We'll travel to the one whose soul was purified of hatred and his heart and his deeds became pure of sins... and to whom I stood confused of his hour; and disabled to execute his commands.

(10)

He was very happy, but his friends and family were dominated by severe panic. I stood confused towards that; what should I do?

I struggled to get rid of that moment: my standing near him and my sticking with his throat made me feel, evil but I was so far from him... the commands required communication and continuation with him to the last moment... wasn't it much better for Mr. (Jalil) to choose someone instead of me for that mission?!!

His excessive happiness confused me. So the tree leaves started to fall of the enormous moment; and in solidarity with the falling of his body, strong wind blew, so people's sight gazed towards him... and he was overjoyed and full of pleasure like a knight who rode over a horse!

For whom was he smiling?... for supposition or truth? I was questioning that time to be liberat-

ed from my present pains while I was living in his throat to the tonsil... in his depth, there was the will of knowledge and the revelation of god in his soul. How could I be an obstacle between God and a soul!

If everything was a supposition, who was I? And why should I shoulder a bitter moment?

He was the destination that (Jalil's) command was embodied and the mission was a big rock that made my chest so heavy... My ambition toward a survival life; and keeping my last gargling in receiving death

depended on completing the hardest and toughest mission... I hid my face lest I pitied his thin body.

I hastened to escape my eyes by closing them. I also covered my ears with my hands; a phantom caught lightening before me saying:

“His freedom is for the sake of the sufferers on earth; so set free his soul which is the nearest to us now.”

“Then, don't forget your promise... “

Compelled, I extended my hand to him to reap the fruit.

He used to divide bread and to pick up fruits with his friends; he hardened their powers with his soul's wine and pour out it to them if they felt frailty... he used to meet people of misled consciousness with love and tolerance, and the evil of evil thoughts with love... his noble heart never insulted or humiliated even enemies... these what made me take the attitude of his son's or mother's killer.

Due to the weakness of his powers and frailty of his body, I heard him calling me:

"Don't be late of what you have been ordered to, purify me for the sake of purifying the others; let me expiate their present and future evil deeds... set my soul free to become a whiff of cleanse for their extensive and to their sores and sly diseases.

I forgive your felony; so don't imagine I'll ask (Jal-il) to punish you one day. It is goodness what you're going to do now, so do your duty!!"

He transcend even over pitying on him and delaying his last moment because he gifted himself to cure the others' souls' diseases.

I noticed that (Aziz) was suffering of bringing that moment... so I decided to take him out of his painful situation and starting with him an exciting talk:

“Have you had the same situation with lovers, for instance?”

“Not every lover, my friend, deserves to blame myself for departing him from his lovers... because there are some lovers who live in their swamp mud; and there are also some lovers who adore the idea and believe it to the extent of belief and they kneel and prostrate themselves to it... all of them are slaves and I hate slavery.”

I smiled but hid my smile, but he paid attention to me:

“Why are you smiling?”

“... Because you’re a slave, too, (Aziz)! Yes, you’re a slave, so don’t be angry of my talk, but continue... your talk about lovers is interesting!”

I got involved in contemplating more of his talk and he fell in silence which disturbed me. I said to him:

"The light started to find its way; come on , continue while I'm preparing breakfast for us with hot tea as you like it... hot tea with mint."

"... Continue about lovers?... OK."

Two young people in "Hamout"... two of the most beautiful young people and the most purifying love... no worse or obscenity had touched them. It was pure love and rare for its depth and their coherence as one soul in two bodies.

Her eyes were like two loaves for everyone in "Hamout" Her beautiful white face was a pot which quenched the thirst of your desert-like hearts, prettiness of her lover dazzled the stony hearts... wars or cars hired by the malignant against "Hamout" did not destroyed it but it was destroyed by her parents and relatives who turned him to be homeless lest no punishment of stoning him to death could occur. A young lady in the prime of life did not exceed seventeen... her uncle kidnapped her from the laps of her father and mother who refused the toughness of

customs and tradition. They crucified her on a tree trunk... they brought all sons of the tribe and the village to stone her with their land stones and the stones of their dirty hearts which were full of malice.

I tried hard to make the big stones farther away from her; and to receive the small ones to avail her longer time to breathe the air... fire was blazing inside the hearts of her silent parents before all people... let alone her malignant cousin because she chose someone else. So he selected the biggest stone and got closer to her and he cleaved her head into two parts until she soaked in her blood.

I interrupted him:

“Aren’t you the commander of the last decision, sir?”

Has her cousin made you overlook to break through your decision?”

He breathed deeply like a person who extracted a lance from his chest:

“My second and last mission and the reasons are the missions of the others... “

I entered the kitchen to prepare boiled eggs and tea with mint... afar, I repeated the question to him:

‘Does the situation make you sad? Why didn’t you prevent cleaving her head by her cousin if you are really hurt of parting two pure lovers?’

He did not answer me. He kept silence as usual when I insisted on something. He entered the bathroom and washed his face. Then, he came to the kitchen to help me completing to prepare our morning meal...

His silence broke through suddenly as he was carrying the tray to the courtyard:

“It’s the promise... the promise... you, sons of “Hamout”, do not evaluate it and you do not know the value of the promise...

One of you twists one side of his moustache promising and swearing by his manhood... but he castrates that manhood and changes his opinion and promise in a second... but we, the ghosts, as you know us here... the promise is like a sword which we put on our necks and we are at the same level of its cutting sharp edge.”

“Do you mean we are the castrated men?”

“Say you don’t have any manhood... do you know... the fire of Hell in its promising day; if you are exposed to it, its flame will be disgusted... the fruits of your heart are corrupted; and your souls are stagnant; and your selves make the pigs escape from their cadavers.”

“Wait... wait... aren’t I your friend? I am one of “Hamout’s” people, too... and you, why are you evading from me... how do you describe me?

I’ve tasted the bitter lest I friend people of authority and influence. I’ve friended deaf and blind people; and I’ve hated their pleasures at the expense of the hungry mouths of “Hamout”. I’m disgusted of mentioning their names; as you said “ the pigs are disgusted of their rotten souls”... but I’m not a pig... My humanity is the cause of scourge; yes, the waking human in my inner soul prevents me from friending them and leaning on pretext to justify collecting a fortune protecting me from destitution. I’m not like them... I’m not a pig!!”

He laughed of my last words (I'm not a pig) and he repeated:

"Actually, you are not like them. For this, I've friended you: because you want to know and ask... the one who wants to know kills the animal inside him and he becomes a human being... I've friended you for the just person inside you... and your smile is not like their buccal lips drinking of their poisonous soul's streams.

"Don't pull me with your speech about the sins of "Hamout's" people away from your point of view toward that girl... stoning... who legalized it for us?... You?... (Jalil)?...his followers? Or we invented it, or men made up it, men who avail good things to themselves and forbade them for the other sex... the man became the master in religion as if all the Islamic laws were founded for him.

"I have no business with your Islamic laws because you are the rougher of the time."

"Is your friend a rougher? Woe to me, how can I hide my rougher off my friend!!"

We devoured our breakfast in laughter, fun and some light jesting. After we finished our breakfast, he prepared himself to go out but he talked quickly:

“There is someone who pushes me to hunt lovers and bring them as a morning meal for instance calculating its time precisely because I’ve never been late for that even for a tenth of a second... I know that flowers never bend to the anguished lover and rain fall for his sake... but

I practice my hobby of rising to another ground.

“My fate obliges me and my fireplace which I live in.”

“Do you live in a fireplace?!”

“Yes, I do live in a fireplace... and miserably I present the victim as a sacrifice and penalty of my survival... that enamored woman was the penalty of my weakness and slavery... her spilled blood flaming all my organs hurt my heart... warm blood and white body was wiggling... what a holy feeling was that!! And what reverence melting an enamored woman’s

hankering all her guilt was to choose the man she wanted... her choice of freedom for herself out of the slavery law of the tribe.

Such feeling of mine made me swim the current-reverse which inevitably shall shovel me to what I did not want and therefore to break my promise."

Do you comprehend the size of my sufferings, Mohamed?!

How I cried secretly and hided my tears!! .. If I showed my tears, and appeared my compassion and my weakness moment, I would be perished long time ago. But my lifetime is long... far long that no one knows it...we'll march toward it that you may see the thunderbolt size

Then I'll turn you back because we have broken through past times, and we'll break through coming times.

Now, I'll get out completing a great mission.... It's my constant passions, my friend, and I have to bear the hardworking.

(11)

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There was something that made me eager to continue writing the smallest details about ‘Hamout’ and my dear friend “Aziz”... I did not leave moiety and any incoming but I recorded them... important and unimportant details. To me, It was a complete life cycle with its short or perfectness... there was what flashed the light, and increased clearness in our continuous darkness.. there was someone who continued his talk with the darkness.

There were rich people who ladled in extravagance, the rich of theft and selling that no honour and no consciousness could accept it!! On the other side, there were penniless poor people... but they used to earn their living in dignity... there were those who were short of giving but they built up palaces, and bought the most expensive cars and jewels... but there were people whose giving never ended even with a loaf of bread.

When I'm alone with myself, I feel as if I were a vacant ship... I used to write as if I were wrapped by an octopus trying to go out of a cocoon!! Many eyes besieged me, and drew me toward them. I navigated within them for a long time so that I could find the causes of their disdainful looks even over asking mercy to regain their humanity.

I dived down the bottom of 'Hamout' of all its four sides, but I could find nothing but war, anger and rare smiling... I apprehended out of deserted lips, and I hoped rejoicing of their depths which alone could spread rejoicing in all the organs of all their bodies.

I recorded what I had heard of the people's mouths when they uttered mercy on past times and their compelling injustice compared with what is happening today.

What will writing make me reach during the flooding of writing like a running river?

The flooding of words, obedient and disobedient letters... until "Hamout" became an exile!! Castles and forts surrounded its tenants with illusion... a vi-

cious circle in which feet turned around as if it were not our homeland and the trees were strangers... the rivers swallowed their water, and their slits became disabled to scream... even the bricks became weird... and the tears aliened in the eye sockets.

Every night, I used to go to my purpose so that I buried myself in writing; I incited “Aziz” to reveal in order to record even his breaths... his quick and still pants... I tried to reach my roots among lines but I never found them clear, instead I found them buried with dust, and rusted.

The land is spacious like a carpet as it was set by its creator. Therefore, why did the spans of it become buzz? and day and night were the same day and night... they never changed, the shadow, the greenness, the water, the epitaphs, the living things, faithful people and the traitors, the mecca and the wilderness... all these I used to write... I also restored the pleasant memories when “Hamout” was a haven and a lap of our childhood... my elementary school... the naughtiness of the children and their books...

their pens and the periods of dictation... the flag of my country was raised high every Thursday... where did all this purity vanish... what do we become?

Does our land's womb become so tiny so that there is no room for us, and consequently turns us to be dead whose bodies decompose and dissolve to become petrol that burns the rest of the living humans?

When I asked "Aziz" one sitting why, he said to me:

- Do you live on a span of "Hamout's" land?

What span is that, and what is the whole size of "Hamout"?

On one miserable span, it happened what happened to me and to the tenants on this span!!

What a miserable span whose richness was the cause of its misery, and the greediness of others of it, so they avail the shedding of blood and pushing the dagger in the loin.

I compare a span of our land in "Hamout" with nearby spans, how do they create themselves from

nothingness, from a barren desert to a country of luxuries, buildings and progress in all tracks of life to an extent that these spans can match the greatest spans of the world, and maybe superior to them. These were not civilization but building up, constructions and luxuries.

They did not have any components of civilization, nor did they have any history of civilization or roots like us. The first of the world civilizations, from splinter to a splinter demolished everything and never built anything.

Where was the defect? Within us for sure, and within those who became presidents over us... they were villains who defiled our land and waters.

What hurt me was that they became masters despite their differences of their shapes, belongings and doctrines. They made life in need of the distorted like them; in need to killing, distortion, and martyrdom for the sake of the homeland... the result was collective death for the sake of suspicious dignity.

(A span of the land of “Hamout”)

Thus great “Hamout” lavished giving; it granted us guiding to ourselves as we flaunted over our brothers, relatives and friends. Every one took revenge of the other, increased hatred and chose ways for their deaths.

Equality is an ugly feature which our masters did not satisfy according to their ethical standards, especially when spiders and bats ruled us, and they became the masters of decisions.

Justice means no equality among people... therefore, was it divine justice?

Yes... it was divine, we were born in different shapes, beautiful and ugly, poor and rich, strong or weak... therefore, why did we demand justice from spiders and bats?

We were accustomed to disparity among us, and it became familiar to us until our souls became ghosts walking according to their shapes... the good and the worse... the rich and the poor... the superior and the mean, the just and the unjust... we were born in grades.

Is life a ladder, and consequently its inevitable to have steps to climb on?

Therefore, on what step of the ladder stands the span of “Hamout”?

We pushed each other in wrestling, wrestling for the sake of wrestling, we were enemies of ourselves before being enemies of the others.

What a comedy of “Hamout” when spiders and bats granted it the honor of life, what misery of the granters... the poor of humanity... which grant from the one who lost his conscience :” Missing something does not give it” لا شيء لا يعطى things moderatend tal;ed to him aloneis handsto unknown thingst preparing my order.nd got outa readt meal

Aggrieved people lived in destroyed houses out in the open... some of them lived in tinned houses. Their children resorted to begging and adultery... these were much spending from the bestowals of their hard childhood... thus the monsters within them revived and unbended.

Dancing... the new dance floor... every one danced in one's own way... a forest danced on the tendon of the grudges... those, the defenders of the God with their devils, and the dancers on turbans which clashed with their greedy purposes violating the land and the humans... gangs on behave of sovereignty, each gang of them had its prison, guards and ways to torture them... a forest hastened to hunt the birds' wings lest they thought of flying one day.

There was an event about a woman who threw two of her children into the river, and she tied her infant round her waist trying to throw herself into the river... it wasn't an ordinary event.... The woman and her infant were saved but her two children had drowned... saviors' hands did not reached them at suitable time; consequently, they became food for fish.

Which hunger or poverty made a mother do that?

Bats destroyed everything even the mother patience... grimacing their grim tusks, they destroyed and repeated destroying everything many times.

It was a must to question "Aziz" here, and to make him submitted to flood of my questions... he was

late in his absence this time, he might be in a meeting with his master and his followers.

He might be on the river bank watching how the fish devoured the two children's bodies... It might be the mission which he got out for... but he said it was a great mission; I resorted to God of his missions.

I sat under a mulberry tree in my house garden thinking in how to accept life in "Hamout" or its span, as "Aziz" said; and why we accepted it in this way?... why did we live on the duality of all things?

I directed the question to myself, and I answered some of it, then I found my disability increase toward what I did not find an answer.

Why wouldn't life be pleasures, joy and happiness?

Were we created to die?...the rising vapor, was it vapor really? Did this universe know its name? The river, did it know that its name was river? Who gave the sea the language of waves?... Who coordinated this creation? Who sculptured the good and evil in our hearts?

I couldn't surrender that life was no more than leaves falling from its universal tree... or it was just

a desire, concern and offence... no doubt there was a hole in the submitted souls... it was not a distant island of tombs whose silence ate the dearest of whom we liked, and the most beautiful of those who lived in luxury and the bitter of living.

While I was in the top of my reactions, “Aziz” entered the kitchen as if he were searching about compensation of what was conquering him by means of eating to calm down his soul.

Despite our strong friendship and our connection with each other, I was passing in bewilderment:

Why, my Lord, had you sent ghosts to “Hamout”?

Then I silenced because “Aziz” was approaching to me, I wasn’t frail but felt the strength of our relationship made me afraid of his absence of me... I wanted to oppose him. Therefore, I picked up a bite near his mouth from his hand:

- Tell me, my friend, how do you feel today seeing rushing in eating, this is not your habit?

- Let me... It was a hard day to me, “Jalil” knows well my weakness toward children... but!”

- "But what? Were you on the river?"

He shook his head painfully:

- "Yes, I was there."

- "Why don't you attend the banquets of pleasure and weddings? You've become a machine in the hands of "Jalil" that he can move it the way he likes!! Don't you have a will, a special desire which you hope to execute to relax a little from slavery?"

I came nearer to him and I hold his shoulder and shook him firmly... I felt my hand as if it was about to be paralyzed; and my body trembled like a palm leaf in wind. I drew my hand firmly, and I sat beside him:

I think that your will and strength used to kneel in front of "Jalil". He got up angrily but I meant to evoke him:

- "Isn't this your top ecstasy?"

He was overcome by wrath... his eyes flashed with sudden sparks which gained me extra strength to face him:

-“Are you wroth me and turn me to a lifeless corpse to prove that you’re the strongest; and to enjoy your mastery over me?”

-“you’re the frailest my mate, yea the frailest who gets his life and survival by means of taking away the lives of others.

This is a submission of the powerful to the more powerful than him... For this, you’re on my point of view the frailest, and the only one who will stay with his master to the last moment.”

Maybe it’s the mutual service between you... between your survival and his survival... Do you think that your direction is the direction of “Jalil”?

I don’t think... There is only one direction... the direction crossing legged over the throne of his ego.

Let alone my raving and tell me now about the reason of your silence, sadness and frailty as you’d said toward children.

He put his palms on his head like the one who recollected a tough hour:

-“My friends susurrated in the ear of a poverty-struck mother, the need and hunger made her think of committing suicide by throwing herself into the river... they susurrated firmly like wind exhalation so that she headed there, and extended her hands to the river then she retreated them to her lap holding tight her two children to her ribs... I hoped that she remained so for longer time... but my friends had to execute their mission accurately, the mother stood up solidly due to crying of one of her children... maybe he felt the moment of departing... or hunger instilled its canines in his stomach which made him cry, but my friends shut his mouth and continued insinuation... the oldest of them approached to her and strained her hand to the side of the river... the two children fluttered avoiding drowning, they fluttered like a broken wing, the rest of my friends looked at me wonderingly, the oldest of them rushed toward me and shook me:

-“Come on... do your duty... your promise... don't forget your promise.”

I can't turn to be an opponent against them and against "Jalil"... I hesitated a lot... but the mother held her infant to her waist tightly, she tied him firmly lest he fell off her when she was to throw herself into the river... I said to them:

-“I'll execute the duty but let's set the infant and his mother free... for this, when we left the place, people gathered to save them... So drowning submitted to our will... Waves and rocks became shining, my friends went back to "Jalil's living room and left me in my grieve, so I went to your house accompanied by naked feeling, and I had a desire to vomit... despite the pleasure of the fish in the fresh meal.

I thought to ask him to take me to "Jalil" and the rest of his friends, but I delayed the idea until his mood relaxed, certainly, he would refuse even if he listened to me that now... time is unsuitable and I have to delay this idea.

(12)

At last, I knew his weak point so I'd coordinate with him in future in many things... I was thinking, merely an idea, but he penetrated my thought, he said:

-“ Let your thoughts for you alone, you will never reach me even in your dream, minimize that lest they kill you because I am closer to you than yourself; and I know your secret before you think of it.”

I answered him cautiously:

-“Why do you make me see you like a pile of bricks, Oh sniper? Don't you get tired of the feeling of greatness?

Your chest and belly swelled of spinning, don't you saturate?”

His face turned pale and his eyes sparkled with a look that I'd never seen before... maybe the word

"sniper" bothered him, he hated the features we used to call him with in "Hamout"... His face darkened and he went very far.

I panicked from the look of his eyes... many colours appeared on his features... yellowish and reddish and a mixture of both of them.

He returned to his calmness and natural attitude:

- "Why do you describe me as a "sniper"?"

- "Snipers became many, sir... and many became the entities which financing and recruiting them... It's an evil empire in all the spans of "Hamout", didn't you say that we lived on spans?

We became we did not know where from evil might come: from the streets, the quarters, the air-planes, the high palaces or the passing cars:

- "Is this a philosophy, "Aziz"?"

It's true we became strangers of ourselves, and the dog inside us rushed on, but we were excused... hunger and need were catastrophe... don't you have a hand in all these?

You said that your followers were preparing the banquet and lift off your shoulders the hardness of preparing, and you came, when everything was ready.

From an unknown land, you came, a group of snipers coming from seas and oceans, from the sky and the ground!!

I imagined that you came on flying saucers; you landed at the hour of hunger, then you play false with us!

-“Woe to you, Mohammad... we do not play false, our job is so hard, we purify the land from your evil. If only I could make the ground utter, I’ll ask it about your rotten bodies, the ground will utter out bilge which is vomiting your hollow depth just when your names are mentioned in “Hamout”.

-“Aziz”... my dearest friend, amidst the momentum of splinters, bombs; uranium and poisons; why never infect any one of you?”

Hasn’t anybody drowned, one day, in the flood of Tsunami? For example, don’t its wind rage and its water rage infect you?

He amended in his sitting, and gazed at my eye explaining:

-“You can’t see my friends; and nothing penetrates their bodies because they are superior to penetration.

They have long hands, and breaths like the doomsday. If they blow in the sea, they will drown whole cities and destroy their edifices... and I extend the net of my arm to harvest the fruit of what they have done.”

- “A collective banquet, I mean, expiates our sins in “Hamout” with the drowned people and those who were buried under ruins... I see you repeat a lot (everything will end to demise) your demise, you and your comrades, don’t you have a doomsday from “Jalil”?

Take me with you one day to get acquaintance to him and to your friends, I’m so eager to that.”

- But you can’t see him or get in his house... He’s unseen for you, and if you meet him, you’ll never

see him or even us... I'm only appear to you in this shape to progress you from the ordinary things to the highest highness.

-‘Which highness, "Aziz" and you are a ghost of devil?’

-“Does the devilish become highness in your tradition?”

-“you’re only submitted kneeling ghosts... and we’re absolute truth than any fable, you’re creatures we have made up of our illusions through the ages until you became truth!!

How can illusion appear in the shape of a man before you? Is my talk with you now an illusion?

The land travail day will come, her belly becomes greater and its pregnancy elongates, she’ll give birth to red eyes and mean shapes... her womb will reject you and find sufficient your distorted human ghosts’ reflections in the sky mirror.

-“and when will that come?”

-“When the greatest cry will come; and my friend “Ashraf” blows within you his greatest blow!!”

-“Ashraf”? a strange name of a ghost!!”

-“Do you think I’m lisping in my speech?”

Our names differ from yours... you desecrate the names with your deeds... you choose the purest names connecting with those who were named with but you the furthest from reaching to the owners of those names... for this peace will never prevails in “Hamout” and it will never remain.

-“Are you going to spread your arms over the whole of “Hamout” in a second, the greatest hour?”

I’ll show you some of our moment under one condition: to keep your steadiness; and the thunderbolt of horror of what you’ll see never struck you.”

-“When are you going to take me? I hope it’ll be very soon!!”

He put his hand on my shoulder, and said:

-“Close your eyes, I’ll show you a great dream”

I felt then that I was in the size of a needle hole between his fingers.

Something dark was falling apart before my sight... tree leaves were falling, new leaves were leafing again... as if I had to recollect and go back to faces and shapes which had passed in my life... the silent rocks; small and big ones... the seas and the rivers... the talkative and the silent... that time, a strong tremble took me rushing inside me in different images... "Hamout" appeared to me naked... its sons were naked and lost... the wind was strong eliminating the last plucks of their bodies... the trees, the shadows... the beings were scrambling and circling around themselves and melting... everything became motionless except his fingers which were playing with my shoulder like a child who had been patted on him...in every press of his finger, new images reached me... scenes of places which I'd never seen before... the solid mountains were turning into fragile remains... the wind was blowing... and with its blowing, the universes turned around...

scenes became wide and narrow until I sometimes got blind , then I returned to see what mind never comprehended... until the earth became like a small ball in the hand of a little boy.

Suddenly, everything vanished... the colours started to turn to violet, yellow and red... I could no longer distinguish a certain colour... and “Aziz” was pressing on my shoulder... the shining of the place doubled with its different colours of lights and glowing... I saw myself hung on a big leafless tree, all its leaves had fallen except one big leaf which I hid behind it surprised of what I saw.

Then, I was alone, I tried to cry but in vain, even I myself couldn't hear my voice ... three ghosts were with “Aziz” transformed to three different beings... light was shining from them their lighting aura circled round them.

The place was completely empty, neither voice nor whisper came... complete silence... suddenly, I heard a horrible call which convulsed the whole

place... the call was in the shape of a question to "Aziz":

- "Who remains, "Aziz"?"

- "Nobody ,sir , but your obedient servant and my brother "Makki, Jaber and Ashraf".

The voice coming from afar answered him:

- "I command you to eliminate " Jaber"

"Aziz" hesitated a lot, how he could execute such a difficult mission.

"Jaber" was the nearest person to him, and the most truthful in dealing with those who were chosen by (Jalil) as the closest friends to him.

I heard him saying this speech while I was listening with all my senses and as he was walking slowly towards "Jaber"; progressing a step and retreating steps... we heard the voice repeating the call (the promise) whenever he retreated; therefore he hastened steps more and more... he reached to a close place to the big tree where "Jaber" was praying

prostrating... as soon as he saw him, he realized that death should come to him inevitably, so he said to "Aziz":

- "Do what you were commanded to do, my friend, don't hesitate"

That moment, "Aziz" hold "Jaber" tightly and rolled his arm around him tightly whenever his tears fell down. "Aziz" strained his arms on "Jaber" until he choked and fell dead on the grass land... then he repeated the question itself:

- "Who remained?"

- "my friends " Makki and Ashraf" and your obedient servant only remained, sir"

And when he commanded him to undertake his mission again, the wings of "Aziz" became like a palm leave rolled by wind... his face turned pale, and stuttered in replying unable to reject the order, and did not agreed to execute that hard mission... He was sure that his turn was coming inevitably... especially when Makki became between his hands

like a fish fluttering outside water, and Ashraf's last breath and gargling inculcated between his fingers as if they were a fan without air!!

He returned back and the grieve tied and squeezed his heart, his appointment now was with himself... he's alone with "Jalil" who was hidden inside his luminous aura... his soul neighing dimmed like his successive breaths... He never fears for a second in his life, he never tasted the flavor of fear or even knew it... weakness, yes, it was... he hesitated and slowed down but he never knew fear... but now he was before his destiny... he repeated the question about who remained, it was the same reply:

-“only your obedient servant remained, sir”

He was full of fear... despite the clearness of the place and tranquility and clarity of the wind... his struggle now with his own self... with his strength and his mighty... with difficulty of the fate... “Jalil” denoted to him to go there... He knew well where the place of “there” was and realized well the depth

and enormity of perishing... but he was an obedient slave as he used to name himself... a slave to an extent that he suffocated the dearest and the nearest person to his soul.

He trailed his slavery to its residence... he walked so slowly until he disappeared... I heard a resounding scream which shook the place like earthquakes occurred here and there at the hand of "Aziz" and his companions... but it was different because earthquakes buried a great number of "Hamout" residents... and now it's your turn, "Aziz"... To me, his absence was hard as well as his scream.

But he pressed with all his power in order to make me wake up of my snooze... I was foaming and chatting... When I opened my eyes and saw "Aziz", I rose up from my place raging:

- "Are you here, my friend? You didn't die, did you?"

He offered to me a glass of water to drink, and he sprinkled some water on my face:

-“Yes, I’m here. I didn’t disappear... and you were in a status of deep dream.”

—“But I saw your Lord “Jalil” and the rest of your companions... I was stuck to the tree; and I saw and heard everything even your scream”

-“you were dreaming... yes, you were... We’ll continue our day. What are going to do today, and where are you going?”

-“I don’t wish to move, I want to sleep... I feel exhausted severely, and I need to get rest.”

He let me dead beat, and he left... But I couldn’t sleep despite my bad need to sleep... the dream increased my bewilderment, and my questions increased about power and its essence... about the causes of things, and about the complete amenability to “Aziz” towards more dominant power

It was the wick of the whole burning, so how could a wick become a special wick and burn itself? This question bewildered me a lot, and the administration of the mighty power bewildered me, too.

All people in “Hamout” aspired to mastery, and all of them were forced by “Aziz” who was submitted to submit to him... How could this equation occur?

Power, submission, might, life and death.

The noise of life and its tranquility, dependent on a dependent’s dependent, how ? I couldn’t know?

I loved him a lot, and I was afraid of my repeated questions which made me a subject of irony before him... besides, I attached to “Aziz”, and I didn’t want to depart him... I would use some tricks in reaching my aim to know what was going on my mind, I would pay all I could to gain his satisfactory.

I got up out of my bed after vigil to make fresh juice... I sat at the living room and switch on the TV... a revolution in the west of the land where I lived in “Hamout”, a revolution of hunger and needy against the rulers... great popular rage in the street, all people were calling in the name of people and the people revolution... I saw the ghost of “Aziz” passing raging among them, then; he disappeared

and returned once again... the numbers of the dead and the wounded increased at the hands of the police and the army of the ruler... with screams, guns sounds and the tear gas, there were other ghosts passing; and “Aziz” was denoting to them with his hand... then they disappeared... they were under his command... how quick he was in penetrating the atmospheres... how did he move from my house to there... we needed seven hours by plane to arrive there... and the voices insisted on their aims:

-“Get out, o unjust dog, we don’t want you on our land.”

Noise increased in more noisy hours... “Aziz” advised his ghost companion... they thanked the great crowd, and the young man who burned himself after whispers by one of “Aziz” followers:

-“hunger is disbeliever; you must burn this disbeliever in your body.”

A ruler departed the place; and the weirder came after him... and the weirdest looked forward silently to what happened to take the suitable opportunity.

“Aziz” absented himself off me a lot and let me to my bewilderment and longing to him and to know his existence among the rebels and the lurking for some chance in order to become the most liar ruler in the name of religion... the ruler was a fierce animal who was malignant and cur; and what had happened was that the biggest animal on earth became the master.

The events succeeded by contagion... and the dogs got out of their jawbones until silence restored itself from the rebels... and the breaths of smoke got higher than the breaths of the rebels.

The news continued to convey the jawbones, fangs and the words of those who bought the sub-mitted tails getting benefits of the current events.

Paradoxes crept among the voices of the people and the voices of the tails... and the fantasies and ghosts were more powerful than the options of the whole people.

The hearts of people hoping a détente of hope and change were taken by deep grief; and their options completely disappointed and failed.

They did not harvest what they aimed; and the wing of darkness fell on their hearts which exhaled more profound misery than before.

They were holding the keys of transformation and change but they turned to hold the keys of rust... and among their calling voices, the sound of rattles of the dead which led to contraction of their throats; and only whistles remained touring their refusing bodies and consciousness apprehending the absence of the consciousness.

The situation mocked of itself, if the aim was to demolish the rusted locks when the rebels advanced to treat and break them; but they did not turn a hair!!

The pure air cracked and became rotten... Owls and ravens spread on the
trees and birds hid.

The same horror... Nothing changed, and killing became common and in public in the streets and closed corners.

As if a great hand were weaving the destiny and planning for it meticulously to make its only hand holding on the aimed distortion. ring inevitably.

In the age of technology and the world from end to end became a small village on the land of “Ham-out” in the age of urbanization that hand leaked to us backward obscurantists and watched on us... It knew that its power was in our weakness so it chose a selection of them and made them masters.

They did not think but in their bellies and their distorted impairments; and in imposing distortion... while their leading funder was shaking his head joyfully of the greatest sovereignty.

I didn't know how could I atone for the sin of what I'd seen; and how to read the faces of the refusing intelligentsia, and how the relation between them and the ugliness and darkness would be.

I also didn't know when “Aziz” would come back, and I would ask him to be guided by the rebels; and he himself became a rebel so that he could be cured of the illness of slavery and submission.

I remembered what he said about the spam, and how he considered the land just a spam in Great “Hamout” until I named my land Minor “Hamout”... I found it better than the word “spam” although I knew it was just a spam in his measure: and we all in the size of a mosquito... anyway, they were dear spams to me; I imprisoned myself in it and I delighted in it.

Despite the fact that I saw amputated organs and petrified hearts... many times my eye resorted to the lovely past escaping from the present... because life crowded all its disadvantages on Minor “Hamout” and the panic of the future.

Those who we used to give them sidelong glances before became admirable by the greatest sovereignty which made a role for them to solve the problems of “Hamout” everywhere; because they were the well which funded terrorism, and to feed the bastards and the inferiors like them, a bastard spent money on a bastard, an inferior and a gay... he drank a dose of poison from his lord with an illusion that

his overstaffed belly had a value; and he believed the game forgetting that was a chess game, and everything had its own time.

The gay believed himself that he knew all things, and in his hand negotiation to solve the crises – whereas he was the evil of life for its good, and the profane on its pureness.

I despised his contempt to himself; that illusion of sovereignty and I pitied him because he did not know where was his destiny leading him nor the destinies of the neighbouring countries which were paying giving to export criminality to us and made it far of their lands.

Then they called to advise the world of pigs... and the denied voices and the tails of the greatest garbage.

It was the highest ambition to egoism and hatred with all their directions... a dance on the universal adultery stage.

(13)

Invitees increased, and among them those who committed outrageous abominations until they defiled the running water... their dirty dreams had branches to dominate Minor “Hamout”.

How I soliloquized my soul to tell it not to give up or despair, but my old heart aged prematurely like my hair which became gray, even the child’s hair would become gray in turning the land of good and giving from grace to curse.

The intellectuals and creators continued to spread awareness and to work what they could to fix their steady feet; and they never gave up trying to change evil so that they stay as young suns in their creation to burn the black forests.

But some of them subjected to the new blindness and became soldiers under its command... they turned to be a horn with a turban, and mopped with the wipes of crocodiles!!

The spams doubled in minor and major “Ham-out”, or any game of the verbal games of naming... the situation would remain the same “Hamout”.

Living peacefully became impossible in time we saw hatred prevailed over our minds, opening its eyes and inserted among the veins!!

When I stood in front of the mirror to comb my hair, I found my face different entirely, a pale face covered with dust of life.

Whenever “Aziz” absented off me, I would feel that I did not belong to the present... but to the world of metaphysical mixing with a ghost or a devil or a jinn... because he never came to me with his real face.

I went touring from room to room as if I’d never lived in them... I blamed myself for strong toes with “Aziz”... What if he wished to return to his homeland and to his Lord’s distant palace... what would happen to me... my unhappiness and joy turned to be tied to a ghost; and time gripped his hands on my neck whenever I thought of departing.

I was taken by a nap which I did not know how long it took, I woke up feeling of hard thirst that burned my throat... As soon as I woke up, I found him sleeping in the bed which I had prepared previously beside my bed.

I did not want to wake him up. On his face, there were the features of fatigue and stress despite his deep sleep.

I drank two sips of water but I suffocated... I coughed hard to restore breath to my chest but my trial failed.

“Aziz” woke up to my voice rattle and the gargle of death in my throat. He got up quickly to me, and he stroke hard on my back; then he blew in my face... and his blow regained quietness and regular breathing to my lungs.

I thanked him and praised my Lord that he came in the suitable time or I would have choked.

-“Aziz”, since when are you in the house?”

-“ ... since the first second of your nap.”

I did not find him happy as usual when he met me... He was putting his hands on his ears whenever I had a fit of coughing as if he were hearing the world bells ringing at one time.

Since that night, coughing, excruciating pains and shortage of breath did not part me... but I did not pay any importance to that... I even did not think to go to doctors, because poisons were in the air due to the spread of poisonous materials from explosives used to enter our lungs without permission from us.

But what terrified me was the scenes of blood in the saliva after a severe fit of coughing and choking... I turned to “Aziz” asking him about that but he did not utter a word... he looked at the blood and turned away his face from me... he stayed for a while and he returned to look at my face... He put his hand on my chest as if he was counting number of inhales of my lungs and number of fits of coughing... then he left me leaving fast to the outside.

His continuous silence and his new treating of me worried me, He no longer talked to me like before... He did not tell me about his diary or take me to other worlds penetrating the times.

He did not absent for long this time... He sat beside me as if he were in need of my eyes... He looked deep in them... He opened the right eye then the left one checking something that he did not utter about... I asked him and hoarseness smothered my voice:

-“What’s wrong with you, my friend. What had you found when you put your hand on my chest, what are you looking for in my eyes?”

Silence replied my question, but his eyes fell tears this time, and he tried hard to hide his tears avoiding my looks at him... even when my looks intermingled, he escaped from them, then he patted on my shoulder, he crossed the room on and fro and the silence was the master of the place.

One night, I asked him to form a party with his companions and to rebel so that he might be influenced by what was happening of revolutions for changing and to gain freedom and dignity... he turned his face to me like someone who wanted to commit a sudden crime...and he silenced!!

Maybe he was thinking of what I was thinking... or he was then like a spark that inflamed fire in itself to rage up.

The cup of water in his hand trembled... He put it on the table and he started to look out of the window.

-“Aziz”... Don’t you tell me what’s wrong with you? Aren’t I your closest friend to you?”

During that, his shoulder started shaking and he inhaled with suppressed weeping.

-“Aziz” is weeing and lowering his head? I don’t believe that...” I said this... I was annoyed as if a grave opened before me... and my bosom wanted to get in it!!

Coughing, suffocation and bloody sputum, that moment, I said:

-“I must go to the doctor, my state is unbearable.”

My friend pretended that he was sleeping to prepare me to sleep... but my heart was beating hard that it became a barrier between my eyelids and sleeping.

He also could not sleep, I knew him well that he used to pretend the same like me; both of us wanted the rest of the other even if he lied on himself.

The next morning, I begged “Aziz” to accompany me to the nearest hospital but he refused pretending that he had a duty to hold a minor meeting with his companions, he did not mention when or where, I only knew that the meeting was special and it was not to be held at “Jalil’s” house.

The doctor asked me about my health, I explained what I suffered:

-“I feel severe fatigue, and loss of appetite and slenderness, disability of movement and smothering with coughing accompanied with blood.”

He asked whether I used to smoke; or if I was exposed to rays and pollution... I laughed a lot despite my weakness and my smothering coughing... after a quiet silence, I answered him:

— "Isn't "Hamout" a chimney, doctor... a chimney and a well and no savior to us.

He shook his head with heartbreak, and asked me to submit to some diagnosis; and he determined to the nurse the kinds of analysis after he had checked my mouth and my swelled pharynx... I felt its swelling because food passed very hard even the soup hurt me during its passing down.

After a week, the doctor called me through telephone:

-""Mohammad, you must submit to chemical thereby""

I inhaled and inhaled and stood still in my place... It never came to my mind that I would develop cancer one day!!

I knew the cause of “Aziz’s” silence and his constant sadness... I was then before my death... for this my friend used to escape from facing.

Who owned a strong heart to hear about its close death... did I have the right to gaze in the malignant eyes and told them even in a glance that life was just a second or even a quarter of second of time?

Did I have the right to practice hatred against the wantons in “minor Hamout”, how could I explain and simplify the idea to them that life is like a knife or a saw edge which re-strike the blow however it was directed, up or down, it would cut.

There is nothing to do now... because the streets in “Hamout” were hidden by masks and the absence of faces... He who did not witness his death with a bullet or bomb, he would face it hotly, coldly and nakedly.

The moon was vacant so that lovers would not be lighted under its ceiling, even the lanterns were

robbed off its light as well as the electricity bubbles the same as building and reconstruction projects.

Among this crowd, it was very difficult to me to change my face or my skin as many people did who found that so easy... where the killer became in the time of pervious rule sober; and guided the praying people in mosques; and issued Fatwa according to his whims or as he might be ordered for Fatwa ought to suit with the reality greed.

For me, it was difficult to wait my last minutes... so I developed new isolation that I was to go out to the cafes discussing with my friends in the life stuff, its advantages and disadvantages... but now I became a prey of isolation awaiting for entering of "Aziz"... I no longer knew whether I belonged to the present or to the unknown.

It doesn't matter if it was tomorrow or the day after tomorrow...because my life wasn't more important than the lives of schoolboys, schoolgirls, children and

Laborers harvested by the ugliness of a car bomb in the market or near a school.

My life was not dearer than their lives especially because their life-harvesting was wholesale deaths whereas my life harvesting was individual. I would not get tired of "Aziz's followers because only one would execute the task, or it was only him.

I spent the time counting hours searching about myself among their minutes whenever I was exposed to a chemical thereby. I also turned to avoid standing before a mirror fearing of my new look!! My hair had fallen here and there.

A pale face and an empty-powered body... continuous vomiting and weak immune made me develop severe slimness at an extent that I could not recognize myself... was that really me or a new visitor entered my life?

A lot of people usually entered our lives, namely murderers and hit men... and masters who were more despicable than them... televisions had shown

a lot of criminals and rapists... they also had shown arms and explosives owned by gangs who were arrested and their dens were discovered... but they did not display about punishing them for their crimes... and no one of them was hanged in the plazas or squares to be lessons to others... they were sure that they should escape out of their prisons easily to repeat slaying once again!!

I became disgusted to an extent of vomiting of a criminal confessed that he lured three cousins to be raped by his friends and killed them before his eyes after that... to belong to the vampires was the law of these dirty people.

The television never showed the punishment of that dirty alligator... but the news leaked about their escape in groups out of the prison!!

“How much you give, I give you; and How many followers of you, you help to let them escape, I do the same for you... and how you cover my thefts, I cover yours”... honor got bored of us in “Hamout” and life became a blind maze!!

That was the truth...As my lungs melted gradually, Hamout” withered starting to suffocate.

All tracks of life stained in blood, and the land of beauty and pleasure, the land of “Hamout” turned to be all suffocation.

What is the difference between the villain who lured his cousins, and he exposed his honor for raping and killing; and the politicians who led all the land to group raping!!

Cancer had a tenderer heart on the patient and less hurting than them... they did not land down on us from the sky, but they came from an adultery world to make corruption; and people fell so that people fell like fish in their poisonous nets.

I... I don't know who I am now... do I belong to the lost race of my breed?

Will the world remain watching us ringing bells on our heads?

The pretending world showed sly even with water...to draw the carpet off my land. I hated drink-

ing water the same as I hated food... therefore what was my need to water while all my land was thirsty.

The world silenced toward criminality of previous rulers; and it silences now and insistently practices the profession of silence, and it only watches.

I wrote about my trembles and my insisting on challenging the disease; now, I write about nearing eruption of another war behind the door!! There was somebody playing on the chord of sectarianism at any spot of "Major Hamout", and he exploits killing or quarrel for the sake of his interest and greed.

ass h he explain to how he left his fingerprint on Heroshima .he shape of" when "of this unknown condition

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From the heart of darkness, I interrogated myself, and I heard the creak of the cold knocking on the doors, I settled down a word but I forgot the other word to rebuild what the others demolished in the souls and consciences; what would happen more than that in “Hamout”?

Due to my extreme adoration of “Hamout”, I used to meet its sons face to face and talk to them every night...I used to unite with them and become part of them, I tried to think of what they thought entering their intentions so that I could reach the reason that made them people who I never knew!! I met all its sons... I used to follow up their depths, and I was about to reach to the idea that we were a fragile world that could be easily penetrated, or what was the reason of our faults that stained us with blood?

And here we are about to be involved in a new danger, my land became without safe peace... while

the light is so clear to be reached and to live under its light.

It was fragile to the extent of losing identity and homeland... I was to go back to them or I was to depart away from them with my own thoughts, and my loneliness. I used to depart to them and the bed used to complain of my body due to its pains and moans.

I gazed at the ceiling but I did not find any savior who could show me the sky to address and implore to it to have mercy and humane on the tenants of “Hamout”, but I could not see but a small skylight from which pale moonlight was coming in... I felt my soul as a ship misled its track and remained forgotten and torn out alone and “Aziz” was doomed to circle around.

Fragility was not inside us when “Hamout’s” young men were hanging out in the roads; and they became addicted to drugs to compensate unemployment and leisure.

My land had never been free of the youth’s power and strong men... and never been a scene of crime or drugs.

When consciousness's let down it a human being, and man let down man's humanity, we became hollow bodies where fighting grew within them and let us stain down with our forth to satisfy our whims and seduction of the penetrators of our land so that "Hamout" could be a stage of their sectarian and racist conflicts.

The sun was no longer so high as I used to know but its illumination faded out on the earth, the unemployed youth and drug addicts (the drugs which were imported to us from the countries which pretended that they were the guards of religion and creed) The credits of the influential increased because of kidnapping children, suffocated and buried them alive if suffocation was difficult after they bargained their parents; and the children were drowned in water bonds by the hands of the generation which we hoped a flourishing future.

a number of my teeth fell and left red festering holes whenever I was exposed to chemical therapy... also, my hair fell... and my skinny body was no longer able to bear radiation to the extent that my move-

ment became restricted to enter the bathroom and to return back to bed.

“Aziz” changed to avoid meeting me, and he did not come every night to chat with me; and if he came, he remained silent and turned away his face if I surprised him with a question, or inquired about him, and about his continuous absence.

Destruction and conflict increased whenever it was time for the oxen to elect their thrones... no sanctity of the tombs of saints, and no sanctity of sacred places where the booby-trapped bombs planted, between here and there, in order to increase doubts between creeds and conflicts.

Shrines were penetrated despite the impunity, protection, audit and heavy guarding... but the adultery of the bombers was smarter despite everything, and the defenseless victims namely women, children and men... there became no sanctity of religion, creed or homeland... ruling throne became the favorite homeland, and reaching it by means of killing became legal by “religion” and politics, legal according to their rotten consciousness.

“Hamout” ... what should I say now, and what should I talk about? Both of us are withering by cancer, and both of us will die... Please, if I died, you stay eternal... I’m now between the canines of a merciless conquest... I hold you in my depths despite the wind that is blowing you... I have to get ready for departure... your images will depart with me... don’t fear... your images will live with me and protect me from punishment.

Do you think that I’ll be punished in the grave? Is there really any punishment in the grave?

If there is really punishment, my corpse will not rotted because you stay alive in it... we will continue flooding together and deal with the earth transparently and purely... we’ll flood and kiss every raging and mighty persons and create calmness in their bosoms... we will the light rooted in our depths... thus I know you, “Hamout” you’ll remain essential love that polish the darkness as if you were the most beautiful and the most delicious honey in the universe.

What happened to me on the bed which was waiting and was like what the farewell hour had hap-

pened to “Hamout”. The obscurantists did not leave a track but they defiled, those herders came from the stockades of their narrow holes... to teach people that blood was a witness of their right of sovereignty.

Pretenders and traitors... they pretended that they were the saviors... they were castrated on the land... sweeping tempests of the people’s lungs... they used to guess that they were superior, and their superiority came by the external malignant support like them... a despicable one support another despicable one to pollute lungs as what had happened to me... cancer the tampered with the minds and souls.

They were creative of the denials and the way they seduced them to their dens... their creativity dazzled me in terminating the people of “Hamout” to an extent that trafficking in the streets was no longer a source of safety to a passing foot, or a child going to his school, or an employee to his office, guile stretched his hand to the earth of the roads and poisoned it for the feet suddenly became remains of burned corpses and blood.

They walked searching about food and livelihood, would they realized that the phones thrown on the ground were for the collective harvest, the harvest of the banquet of ruin.

Our great city did not win but missing... we lost everything... even the idea of emotion even the bell of peace was not allowed.

Massacres' scent reached my nose whenever I aimed to the hospital to have a dose of therapy which turned my body to ruin... so that I could not see but vapors rising up from sin.

"Aziz" used to be silent, and his coming in and getting out became a movement hastened before me, and a hand giving me medicine and water... even my hope for him to get into any speech that erase my darkness and the minutes of my pain, He became a loser, I did not know if the ghosts had a time for silence, and a time for speaking, weren't they talkative like us?

I played with the words, I provoked his rage... I provoked him... I replaced silent minutes with other

minutes moaning (ah!!) I fidgeted of the situation, I mentioned to him the minutest daily details, and no movement in his lips but a yellowish smile.

One day, he went out and never came back... I worried a lot because no one visited me and comforted my pain but him... people in “Hamout” were busy with their daily burdens, even neighbors became strangers to each other... but he returned at night with three ghosts... I tamed my silence and hold it tight lest I panic... “Aziz” approached closer to me to reassure about me and he wiped on my hand, then he introduced them to me... he did not tell me their names but he only told them my name so that they greeted me with gestures of their heads and silence.

What was happening, I did not know, I pointed to “Aziz” to serve the guests instead of me because I had no power to do that... he, in turn, pointed to me to calm down and be stable because there was no need for compliments, and to consider them as the house owners.

I smiled to myself: “the owners of my house became ghosts... and sometimes their shadows!”

Yes,... shadows... many times their shadows entered but they did not enter, they were accustomed to that especially in the absence of “Aziz” ... I used to hear their whispers but could not understand their language.

They stuck me as if they were guarding me, or taking the chance to be more stuck me whenever my friend the ghost absented, ... and , I felt an organ of my body paralyzed and it became blue in colour whenever they caught it, and , he increased gloom and his silence became greater, “Aziz” seemed as if he were already getting out of a painful struggle whenever he came back and noticed blue spots which spoiled that surface of my body.

Tonight, I felt terrible mess as if I was not a humane or a living thing... a humane was hurt but never hurt anybody in his life. He used to love all and he adored “Hamout” the same as his lover. A humane got never married, he dedicated his life for eternal adoration, and he joined his heart to himself lest a female might share it with him... adoration of “Hamout” dominated him... from the seed to the moment of paralyzing of the organs.

Tonight, I was different from all the past nights, maybe due to sticking of the friends of “Aziz” with me, and their constant closing from me... I felt as if I were hollow from my hands to my feet... within the hollowing, I heard and felt what was going on round me... I noticed that my tongue became heavy and memories were crossing my imagination, my childhood, my orphaning, my youth, my graying, my power and my illness, and “Hamout” was haunting my blood and with all my vision... all I granted it and what it granted to me of wide meadows passed before me.

Light columns in the street which I studied under their light at night, I outperformed in my study because it hugged me... the highest thoughts became a mixture of pain and conflict with the minutes and their seconds... each green prevailed its shadows over me, and I restored the green zone now... What did it join under its shadow? It joined the murderers, the traitors and the burners of the whole people; it joined sellers of the country and those who burned it altogether... it joined the op-

ponents and rivals. Woe to me, how could the green become a stockade?!

I thanked “Aziz” and his order to his companions to take care of me especially because I became disabled to get out of bed to go to the toilet, I no longer felt with the warmth of the shit under me but its smell used to penetrate my nose.

Before I ended up my thanks to him, two big tears fell down his cheeks and ran down his neck... for the first time I saw him crying bitterly, I knew him strong and hard like a mountain, therefore what made him cry; so I apologized to him:

-“Sorry, my friend, I withdraw my speech if it was the reason of crying of who I loved.”

He looked at the three ghosts’ faces and he silenced again... his silence slayed me, I was longing for his voice, his jesting and fun with me, and his superiority on me and my orbits... I was really longing to his voice... I damned silence and who founded it in our existence until it exacerbated over the whole life.

Silence... How much I hated it, despised it and loved it at the same time... I sometimes I accompanied it and it accompanied me because it was more eligible than talking... or even than any speech which interpreted or explained the minsters' or presidential meetings in minor or major "Hamout"

Our minsters and presidents used to meet for the sake of inventing deaths... and not for inventing a drug to stop cancer... for the sake of entire submission to their masters, but not for ending up the illiteracy and crime, or ending up the conflict.

They used to meet to insult each other; and most of them used to sleep during the meeting then they concluded the insults and void.

(15)

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The more I spitted out blood with sharp coughing, the more “Hamout” appeared to me with piles of corruption, piles of those who were dying of hunger and the corruptors who tampered with its wealth due to greed.

I had the right if I said wasn’t time for it to rebel and yell? What made it so silent?

What brought this silence while the agonizing voices had been lavished by praise, modesty and appreciation?

All here controlled all, the big ate the little, a foolish life, and did we have to live it?, Or did it really deserve to live it?

Were we destined to live with dangers and made fear and all types of hell.

Our bodies were a banquet of death... didn’t death love but its salt?

Did the unjust fear death in order to collude with it against us?

Oh, my Lord, I was about to be crazy and questions melted me, I no longer bore two illnesses at the same time... my body became just cold marble... if I stifled what I was suffering of despising our existence and the reality of new “Hamout”, I would explode. I had to incite “Aziz” and his followers so that all dangers could threaten us due to their slavery... we were born free... we were nothing but a means to continue the slavery of the ghosts, so it was a mutual interest between them and “Jalil”, between the slave and the master.

The news volatilized about the banquets of the masters and the slaves like the smoke of fires... so we heard about blood already spilt on the pavements, thus the hymns of “Hamout’s land with its daily play and chant... and if tears did not fall daily, “Aziz” would assail, tour, fidget and fear... and within his fidgeting, a mighty grave opened for a catastrophe and flood, for shipwreck in the sea, for a plane

crash... then he sat down quiet-minded listening from the TV and wiping his chest proudly for falling of the leaves of life tree.

One day, I was angry with him and his silence:

-“Are we just a scar on life as you think?

The cities, the rivers and the seas, built palaces , buildings and the whole earth, all these are a scar on the face of life and you have to excise, you greatest surgeon ?”

He shook his head positively and got angry, I was about to see sparks volatilizing from his mouth, but he silenced again, maybe he had pity on his friend due to what he was in... yes, he attached to me to an extent of silence towards my illness. He sat at ease beside me on the bed... then he started to speak calmly:

-“You miss conjuncture of me, my friend... I had thought a lot in my forced soul and my forced opinion... I had decided to escape many times, but where to?! Here was the problem... searching about your-

self does not need complete submission, but repeating trials to escape... you believe that I'm a ghost who is represented in the shape of man... but belief is not the truth... you haven't tried the sensation of contradiction before those who are superior to your rank and in their hands are your decision and your destiny... it's a puzzle... yes life is just a puzzle and I don't have to solve it."

I withdrew my body weakly and I raised barely my head off the bellow:

- "Whose hands then solve it?"

- "...in the hands of 'Jalil'"

- "you return again to 'Jalil'"

- "Yes, he's the greatest result which circle your thought now and before, the axis of your questions circles around it, am I right?"

- "Then... you consider the truth in the absolute slavery, don't you? Wow!!"

- "Yes,...it is absolute, and you have to accept it"

He made me laugh with his insistence in staying in his situation:

-“But rather say the mutual interests between the powerful and the more powerful than him... this is the truth which I’ve concluded to now... I give you the same as you give me, and the way you keep on me, I keep on you... but when I get satiety, I’ll throw the remnants to you, I eliminate you and I remain alone as the absolute master of the place... then I spit you out of my stomach again to make a slave, and seduce you with a stable and care free life... to the followers and the close companions are convinced with the great day of rest.”

-“Do you know, “Aziz” ... those followers are disabled people who do not like work or hard work, they go after their sexual whims and erotic organs, they exploit a workless day to eat, sleep, cohabit and drink... therefore it’s a non-working erotic and corrupted society.

-“We are the sons of universal adultery... Aren’t we brothers and sisters of fathers and mothers?

How do we reproduce and become races?... we are the races of the first adultery, we prohibit it and make it one of the great sins, and to make it lawful at the end.

We restore the right which we always wish and it was usurped from us... those who prohibit it for us, they'll be in the highest steps of the non-working society... they practice all of what they prohibited and they were deprived from it.

Maybe they did not miss it but the practiced it secretly lest their power and control over us might be eliminated... most laws which they issued were due to personal interests ended up in their favor... and what I concluded was the truth itself... and even in the non-working society, they would be in high ranks... this means we'll remain in the second or the third ranks... and maybe lower than that.

"Aziz's" friends did not embody to me as humans like him, they remained ghosts who went round my room, and they approached and stuck to me... they

listened to our talks... and they did not make any signal.

I felt strange snow moving slowly in my body to-day... one of the ghosts put his palm on my forehead when I yelled of pain... another ghost approached of him and whispered but I did not pick up their whispers... and my forehead also chilled... then the third ghost wiped on my chest... I felt as if I were a person who wanted to be loss of himself... my eyelids dropped responding to the third hand which wiped my eyes... and “Aziz” was standing as a viewer.

I paid efforts to open my eyelids off their sticking... my eyes met “Aziz’s” eyes, and his faint weeping... but the wind blew from the window, he wiped and his full-of-tear eyes, and he extended his hand to the window as if he was trying to stop the wind... but all my body trembled... the shaking of the wind penetrated my friend’s hand and entered from another window... and settled down on my chest ... the ghosts were passing their palms here and there... on a thin bare body... the three ghosts besieged me as if

they became waves which swam with me and highly raged, and “Aziz” turned his back to them fearing to see their raging holding my breaths.

I got out of control of all things belonging to me... and followed my signals... the ghosts treated me haughtily and overwhelmed more than before... within their struggle and my submission, I fell asleep.

Then, I dreamed that I was raised high on the hands of “Aziz”, and the air flow through my white clothes, and my hair and body... his arms extended to the wind... and I did not know where I was... where were his ghost mates, did they remain in my house or would they follow us where my friend might take me.

“Aziz” whispered to me to breathe deeply... before I submitted to him, I looked at “Hamout” afar, I saw it as an escalating chimney... I breathed deeply and submitted to my friend who was pleased with my complete submission... and I was repeating to myself:

-“ You became a slave... you became a slave, Mohammed... you become a slave to the powerful... you become a slave. “

Biography

Wafaa Abed Al Razzaq

Poet, novelist, And a short story writer

- * She born in Iraq – Basra.
- * She lives in the United Kingdom – London.
- * Chairman and founder of the Association of Creativity for Peace, London.
- * Peace ambassador from the Al Furat of world Peace Organization.
- * Commissioner of the International Federation of Arab writers and poets In 2018.
- * Nicknamed by (lady of the Earth), the cultural personality For the Year 2017- 2018 from the World College to promote Friendship among Peoples
- * SheAwardedthe Scientific Research Award from the world Academy Ofthe Peace in 2018.

- * She nominated to noble Prize for literature from the center of letter For Arab Culture at Stanford University, 2017.
- * Ambassador of the Galilee City for world Peace in the United Kingdom, London.
- * Ambassador of international literature and honorary member of the World College to promote of friendship among peoples.
- * Ambassador for the Arab culture global, affection and Peace, honored Ofthe world college to Promote of friendship among peoples.
- * Ambassador of Goodwill and peace among the peoples from the Middle East organizations of rights and freedoms.
- * An academic ambassador for the Arab culture in the world from the Centerof letter for Arab studies at Stratford University USA.
- * An academic ambassador of the Arab Arabian narration from the Center of letter for Arab culture at the American University of Stratford.

- * Vice-President of the Arab Cultural House in India.
- * Her Diwan won (from Memoirs of a child of war) after translated it into French language "The "House Laramatane" Paris, in her annual project "From the five continents" of such as of Continent of Asia under the supervision of Prof PhilipTansoulan, after he won the first prize from Lebanon, from Dar Noman, Mitropolite Nicola (for humanity virtues), (Lebanon).
- * She was honored from before the representative of the League of Arab States in India.
- * Advisor to the Association of Creativity Arab world and the Diaspora The United Kingdom.
- * Member of the Mustafa Jamal Al-Din literary Association.
- * Addressing their literary achievements by many critics through studies And Reviews published in various newspapers, paper and electronic Journals, The last of which was:

1. A book (imaginary and the expressionist) by Dr. Nader Abdul Khaliq, Egypt.
 2. A book (Fantasia text) by Dr. Walid Jassim al-Zubaidi, Iraq.
 3. Dancing on the chords of words by Alwan Al Salman.
 4. A book of Honor titled "Wafaa Abed Al Razzaq, horizon between condensation and experiments", Foundation of Cultured .Australia.
 5. Diversity of composition and the effectiveness of discourse, Dr. Ikhlasmahmud Abdullah-Iraq.
- * Were her issued 54 book in eloquent and popular poetry, and the short Story, the very short story, poetic stories, the novel, and the translated Books
 - * SheAwardedmany Arabic and Global prizes.
 - * She Participated in Iraqi festivals, the Arabic and global.
 - * She was honored in many Iraqi universities, and the Arabic and Global.

- * She received the Peace ambassador necklace in 2012.
- * Were translated its works into the following languages:
Spanish Language, French, English, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Italian, German and Serbia.
- * She gained its works poetic and anecdotal novelist university studies, And a Master and doctorate degree, Doctorate of State and graduation Certificates.
- * Passed her works-56-thesis-82-thesis has not yet been passed Between PhD and Master in Arab, international and Iraqi universities.
- * Were Studied its works poetic and anecdotal and novelist as a rapporteur In Iraqi, Arab and international universities.