

Wafaa Abdul Razzaq

The Braid Dance And The river

Novel

Translated into English by:

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The Braid Dance and the River

Preface

Words..

I, also, have questions...

What will happen to this beheaded head?

Where is that word which shakes the heavens?

The night is still staggering, and the terminations are
smoking!

The rain shower is degenerate, The moment hardly
comprehends the predictions.

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Chapter 1

For giving birth to something inside our souls,
We'll stand one silence minute every day.

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To make clothes out of the sun to fill the holes of life,
One has to be open first to oneself before the others, and
to exclude the evil spirit out of the souls, or one will be like
them, too.

To sculpture another will... To establish a new lyricism, and
glow in order not to let life mute... Where to do reality and
the wheel of time lead him? No one knows!

He approaches nearer to his soul, and sometimes drift
away of it, to dialogue it and know where his feet lead him.
So that he can simulate his inner sides to extract the words
out of them even if they were ambiguous:

- It is not strange that you are dead. The strange thing is
that you do not play and convert life into a silent tragedy...
I'll play and play so that my voice can reach the heaven,
and convert the invisible into realms of light.

The wind of winter lifts up his shirt at night. Therefore, a
sting of cold pinches him. He trembles and his teeth
chatter, then he sticks to his body like a ball, imploring his
heart to beat:

" Don't despair if you remain alone! Things come from the other side. The important thing is to find them."

Light rain does not wash his soul. He remains a dreamer of appearing of her lighted face from the window. He waits for the passing of her perfume coming from the paradise whiffs. He summarizes his eagerness with deep heartbreak. In all the mirrors, he sees her face, even in the sparkling of the dew drops so that he can become a rose waiting for trembling. He continues searching for the word that can heal his thirst while he is lying on the earth like lying in a bed:

- " Everything melts: water, rock, the mountain, the shore... everything melts there even nouns, all nouns including the best of them, except the flute tune which is the only flourishing in all words.

The flute player liked to repeat the tune and his blowing in it as he was leaning on a big tree branch, and whenever the darkness crept, he would feel a weird light surrounding him.

The light emerged from the depth of water, from the ground surface ,from the sky, from beyond the ether and from his depth.

Every night, he wears the same blue shirt and the jeans as his permanent clothes which he never changes. What makes him happy in the darkness is to watch lovers who hide away from their parents' power, embracing under a

big tree shadow. He hides himself in order not to corrupt their lovely solitudes, and their schemes of their near future. He does not want to see enamored girl clad in a sadness shale. He covered himself with tree leaves straining his breath now and then, waiting for a sudden kiss from a lover on his beloved neck.

Before the dawn rising, he wakes up with deep space in his spirit, full of ecstasy. He keeps silence listening carefully as if he were in divine atmospheres and prayer rituals... The 7-year-old weird boy comes closer to him, with his tat clothes, torn on the sleeves, and with three holes on the chest... Together, they become one: a flute and a mute boy!

The mute boy does not care for the words and their meaning. He only cares for the their signs, and to approach more to the real-time situation in order to describe it with his thin fingers.

He usually sits on a small rock with quiet looks, listening to a word passing through his mind, to imagine it in his little mind, and then converting it into a sign.

He watches the sliding of the sun on the hills which are full of new shining, and he disappears with its full appearing.

Like him is the flute player. He sings, even when he could not, so that she might come, or pass momentarily with her shiny clothes and her slim waist... turning his head to the rustles of tree leaves expecting her steps, the sparkling

of her treasure eyes. He extends his fingers touching her charms, as if she were emerged from the nature womb. But he only collides with void.

He is sure she is coming... grass may become yellow, and roses wither, but love never withers... on all times, love remains stuck to water because ,with water, it lives.

Her name takes off from between his lips like a bird flying high over the existence... then turning back to his place extracting from the dream other dreams which it has never seen, to start his next trip.

The weather is a little cold, and the wind exhales routinely playing with what has remained of time for the sun to rise.

Before sunrise, a young lady appeared in white clothes like a rising sun. When the boy saw her meek features, he followed her silently, as all the mute always do, bowing his head and smiling. He approached her to carry her wheat spikes when she wiped his dusty hair, and gave him some small spikes.

They chose a place at steps distance from the village. They sat down whispering to each other. After that, they set off together toward the village gates where they put the spikes.

They went and no one knew their direction. The flute player awaited her coming, and the movements of the boy's feet because there was no shelter for him but theirs.

The boy becomes speechless and hesitant whenever the other children intend to play with him. He deeply wanted to play with them but something more powerful than him prevented him from that.

He folded himself spearing his nails into the earth tracing unintelligible signals which never formed a name, or a wish he intended to get in order to be realized by them. Instead, he only sucked his middle finger and forefinger.

Every night, he used to dig in a place, then he changed the places according to his whim. He used to look at the sky, to the flute player's face, then he directed unintelligible questions to both of them, and he dreamt with the answers, and whenever the flute player asked him about the cause of his love to dig, the boy found nothing but shaking his head and pursing his little lips and silence!

When the moon widely opened its gates, he wiped his fingers with his short clothes, and like a father and a son , they embraced each other and cried.

The player became nervous whenever they entitled him as " an Idiot".. then he turned to be mad due to the title they stuck on him. He used to complain to himself and to the child:

_ " Imagine, they entitled me as an idiot or crazy man! But my self-confidence makes me control my anger, and forgive them, believe me I excuse them.. I even have pity on them. For them, it's impossible to believe what I related

to them, but the most thing gladdened my heart was their joy with the spikes.

I like the old man, " Olwan" , and I love his eyes which were similar to eagle's eyes. Whenever I looked at them, I used to feel blood freezing in my veins! He had a look that penetrates the thoughts in the others' heads. His constant silence was a proof of his belief of what we saw or related to the village people... he was confident that he said that through his look at me:

- " I know your secret, but I won't disclose it by my will... " I made my decision not to look at him if he faced me challengingly, I would trouble myself with anything to avoid him. This way is better!"

Surprising signs were on the faces every morning in the village:

- " where do these spikes come from to these doors?"

No one waited for the others' questions or their answers:

- " I want to see him."

The old man with the damned eyes replied:

- " I don't want to see him. Maybe he's an idiot like the flute player. Why not he's the flute player himself?"

Then he realized that he committed a mistake:

- " where might the flute player bring the spikes though the ground was rocky. "The child and the flute player

smiled without uttering one word... who believes an idiot or a mute if they told them what they saw in the darkness?!

A fat woman with the black shale surprised them because her half face was paralyzed... and because she collected many spikes, and put them in a vase. She used to irrigate and change their water every day, so the spikes did not wither despite passing more than a month... every dawn, she used to add a new spike to them.

She told them about her husband who was jobless, and due to the spikes, he got a job with a salary that was enough for the family requirements.

Her absent son returned back to his village from foreign land. Before, she used to beseeched him to come back! So due to the " blessed" spikes, their lives changed to the best... even her spinster daughter got married.

All of them laughed sarcastically, but the child and the flute player smiled confidently because they were the most people who knew well who was spike distributor.

Some mothers raised their heads, and opened their chests wishing their dreams might come true... other ladies remained in bewilderment!

The flute player wanted to unveil off their eyes the curtains and hit the nail of the truth but they did not believe him:

- " I saw her descending from a cloud, flying in her white dress raising her arms full with the spikes toward the roofs of the houses as if she wanted to get over the roofs to get nearer to the sky."

Then he added after he had swallowed his saliva, and his eyes gazed:

- " Here she is passing..."

The child extended his hand as if he wanted to catch the space, and he walked astray following her steps. While he was astray in her glittering eyes, they entered the last house in the village, and they penetrated the wall.

The young lady sat beside the head of a farmer's wife laboring. No one saw her wiping the forehead of the woman drying her sweat, then she passed her hand on her belly. The child alone stood at the door waiting..

The house owner asked him whether he had the wish to eat, and he introduced to him some sweets and bread with cheese. But he looked at the food and kept silence.

He anxiously sat at the threshold, and the woman overcame with her patience and steadfast the laboring whenever the young lady was passing her hand on her belly... and sweat drops seeped from her forehead, she talked to her husband loudly:

- " I feel that somebody is beside me! Believe me I feel his breaths"

He trivialized the situation for her:

- "No.. never.. It's only the labor fever, I hope you won't have obsession... With Allah's help, you'll give birth to your baby."

She pointed to the child and they got out.

After an hour, the husband heard the cry of the female baby... He rejoiced because he always wanted the new event to be a girl, and Allah responded to his prayers, and when the midwife asked him about the name he chose for the little girl, he replied with his eyes full of joyful tears:

- " Rayhaneh (basil tree) I name her Rayhaneh."

His wife was amazed and marveled because his wish was something different, Many times, she asked him to name her like her mother's name, but he insisted on his mother's name "Miriam", therefore, what was new to him to name her Rayhaneh?

She felt jealous, and thoughts took her far away fearing that "Rayhaneh" might be her husband's mistress name! but she clung to wisdom as he told her "

- " Truly I say I don't know why I chose this name. It was as if I had heard calling from heavens whispering in my ear, and I felt as if the space was widening and widening accompanying with fragrant euphoria was going on me, indescribable euphoria while I was mentioning the name " Rayhaneh".

She was convinced that her husband was in a new love.
She thought and fully wondered but she did not get to
answers.

The Night roams everywhere

Making dreams

Full of the roofs' songs,

Out of the screams.

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The village people are good people who beautify their dreams with the days' fatigue. They used to plant them in the ground. The dreams were their great passion.. even if the Time was parsimonious, their hearts remained full of amity and fraternity.

Flowers are boasting at the fronts of the houses which are simple and humble-built. Tender buds spread clad in shiny different colors like women and children sparkling clothes. Thus they were: back-to-back houses and loving hearts.

Each house has a small court yard surrounded by rooms, and in the mid court yard, there are vases of colorful flowers, orange and lemon trees... The children used to play outdoors, before the houses forming circles, and singing folkloric songs inherited from their parents and ancestors. The walls were flourished by the grandmothers' tales and the mothers' babbles of their babies.

The most beautiful children would grow up to become their most beautiful future. They would also beautify the days which are waiting for their shining tomorrow... in a

perfumed atmosphere caressed by the sun's fingers, and under the shadows of the trees they would play.

A young lady passed quickly. Her eyes were full of sunny drowsiness while light moist breezes were blowing on her two blonde braids. She was a slender tall girl with wide eyes which would turn her lovers slaves!!

The mute boy did not resemble anyone in the village. He came from unknown place... The villagers tried repeatedly to compensate him with a beautiful new clothes, and force him to take off the torn clothes, but he refused that entirely! He might think that his torn clothes were his only guard from being lost!

He bent on a rock away from the eyes, and away from his lost years. He looked at the sky, and extended his hands to it conversing his mother in his soul:

- " come along with the Night my mom, the weather here is wrapped with quietness of darkness. All the darkness is my life, and the days are a long coffin... Come along to roam with you over the valleys and trees. Let your wing be powerful like the supreme power of your murderer, and who murdered my father and let him be imbrued with his blood.

The pain of your and my little sister's remoteness pierced into my heart like a knife stabbing into soft flesh! This turned my eyes into frozen tears. Do you know, my mom, the toughness of the tears when they froze in the eyes?

They become sharp-pointed rock, or glass! And when I move my eyelids, it broke and becomes tougher and more painful!

What shall I do so that you come back to me?

Yesterday, I visited our house, but the windows did not recognize me, neither did my stained-in blood bed... even the dead hens, their feathers were frozen on them, and to embalm them to last as impacts that witnessed the oppression of the infidels and false Muslims."

He saw his little shadow lying as he looked at his face in the mirror. The shadow scared him, and he was surprised that the shadow is bigger than him. It was so dark black. He broke the only mirror which he found in the house. Therefore, the torrent of darkness flooded to fill his soul and his delusive place.

He turned back quickly to the flute player. He hugged his head pressing it to his chest.

The attendance of the boy was the most temptation to the flute player for the harmony of the boy's soul perfumed with his breaths and primitive innocence that were able to dominate him.. his flute was part of him as well as the dominant attendance of the boy.

In his daily touring, he used to inspect something that he did not know, or he knew it, but did not realize it due to his age! It was not the flower, nor was it the shadow because he remained without a shadow! But he searched

for the most beautiful rivers, the most truthful men and the most beautiful women, the same as he dug in the earth thinking that he would find the most beautiful days, and his family.

That was his habit whenever he was alone to the extent that the earth adored him contemplating his nails so that had his fingers crooked and his nails blackened, he certainly was not able to dig deeper in order to appear water drops from the depths, or to establish a hole to collect the rain drops.

He was looking for what had remained from the earth odors, or from a moment in which he did not spend the night terrified.

All the villagers pitied him so they used to treat him amiably like fathers, and tenderly like mothers.

Sympathetically, they used to feed him, but they were surprised to find the foods untouchable. The boy did not take even a bite of the bread, and the clothes they gave him were also untouchable!!

He liked to walk behind the angel who had landed from a white cloud. His soul blossomed like a rose whenever he saw the angel.

He used to move with her from a doorstep to another, while his heart was pulsing of the melting of the long golden hair in the fresh breezes in the darkness. They both put the spikes on the doorsteps till they lost in the fog,

and navigated like a boat with white sails. He retreated to his place beside the flute player after the absence wind weakened him.

With the flute playing, he heard the singing of birds which were coming back to their shelters. the winter also was singing the song of snow falling on the ground... they both squatted: two bodies and a flute, and the green scuffed its tails toward paleness, and sang with them the fall song.

They sat on the cold earth and yellow falling leaves which were shining under the light poles.

There were some things which he had not sung yet, nor his flute had ever tuned... the flood of the days never quieted, everything slept but he, even the night guard whose eye took a sudden nap while his other eye remained guarding its waiting moment!

Voices came and went: voices of gypsies away passing by, and there were many that subsided, even the big trees and the orange and lemon trees. Their tastes also subsided to become just a taste.

The letters remained stuck in his mouth, and the questions were staggering under his tongue:

- " Why, why is blood filling the letters and turns them into paleness? Why doesn't the air convey our speech, and penetrate every ear?"

Why do the executioners sculpture our names with
participation of similar executioners from our homeland? ..
our sons are against us... why are our sons against us?

Why are we preys of the racial and sectarian differences
until they all become familiar?

It is ordinary, even very ordinary to a brother to kill his
own brother or to betray the person who has helped him,
and stab him in the back!!

What flute, and what song can tell about yellowish
features due to their malice and falseness?

The hours are passing like days and nights, and the spike
bred, and questionings smothered the mouths.

Longings were magnifying, and fingers, which did not yet
do ablution with their prospective light were intertwining.
And the question was roaming everywhere... where? ...
where? Where would I find you?

If all the windows of the world were broken, my heart
window would remain waiting your smile.

He looked at the space and smiled a fading smile meaning
nothing beautiful without his heart beloved.

He sat assisted by himself on himself, complaining to her.
He uprooted a small plant between his palms, and all the
place was full of odors.

Sounds and voices of weeping, crying and screaming provoked him. He walked toward the screams. The villagers crowded around the house while the women were hitting their chests and tearing their dresses to express sadness for their dead young lady who suffered of cancer. Therefore, the Lord chose her to the other world. That time, he saw the angle hovering over the house roof ascending toward the sky, followed by another angle with unclear features.

He went back to his flute playing to his beloved of his life a song which she never heard before. He held her with his two young arms, and kissed her eyes. The angle came back with his golden spikes while he was absorbing in his flute playing. In the angle's hand, there was a new spike which he put on the house step of the newly dead lady.

He hugged the boy waiting for the rising of the morning and their absence.

Chapter 2

I will become your eyes

I see with them

the land and the sky

We will be witness of the event.

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Whenever Mrs. "Zaina" tried to approach and touch the boy, he fled from her quickly returning to himself: his constant and expecting fleeing... she used to wipe her tears with her dress sleeve, and let him go away... with him, she remembered the childhood of her two sons whom she lost in the mountain of Sinjar.

He had no choice but to be alone, and he did not accept any giving... The villagers did not know where he came from, or why did he come to their village particularly... there was no deep or amazing idea about his features.. He was a prey of all differences and contradictions... He had a shape and a complexion and he had a shadow that used to disappear, then he returned in another night to weep, laugh and disappear... he did not appear unless the noise subsided, the eyes quieted and the bodies stabilized in their beds, and fell in deep sleep.

He had long soft hair on his shoulders and two wide eyes. He was slim, and tended to brownish skin which was nearly yellowish... Amazement was shown on his face features. And with his slim fingers, he used to wave to return the greetings of the others, and he used to smile.

Mrs. Zaina saw him smiling whenever he saw two spikes on her doorstep at dawn. She did not know why they were two spikes, and why she differed from her neighbor " Abo Serdar" whose share was only one spike like " Kawi".

She asked many times whether he had a family, and what could she do for him until she became desperate because he followed her with miserable looks, and never replied.

"Um Juan" was more joyful and surprised because she used to see three spikes every morning. She collected them, and she put them on a decorated rug, and let them to the sun to dry.

She told many weird stories about some spikes which she put in a vase and irrigated them lavishly... she narrated that she saw in a dream a young beautiful blonde lady sitting beside the vase and irrigated the spikes from her fingers.. water was flooding out of her fingers, but it was red like blood.

Fables about the spikes, dreams, the boy and the flute player spread until they became parts of the people and their talks in the cafes.

As for "Azad", his constant situation was in a state of vanquish. He did not care for any talk about a fable. His life had been and was still miserable between its good and its bad, and between his isolation and losing two boys and one girl who had joined "Peshmerga" forces to fight "Isis".

He did not smile but when he heard news about killing a number of them at the borders between Kurdistan and Syria. These news became his daily provision and his only solace.

But the savagery of the pictures and videos broadcasted by TV, and the news stations about Isis and their inhuman behaviors which were impossible to be committed to any religion or creed under the pretext that they were defending the religion of God, made the Kurds in hysteria of sudden and shock... (To you be your religion, and to me my religion) <The Holy Quran(CIX -6) P. 109>... About any religion did they talk, I wonder ? How could religion be the devil himself?

Does the divine suffering leave these savage murderers who pretend that Paradise is theirs?!!

They seduced the naïve young people, alcoholics, and drug addicts to join them... they were to explode themselves aspiring to enter paradise where they believed to be received by the virgin companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes... then, for the sakes of women?!

Are burning, slaying, capturing and killing the keys of their paradise?

And "Khallat" who moans day and night for losing his daughter, the volunteer to defend her homeland, and who nobody heard any news about her since she left him despite his will. he was caught in the crossfire: defending homeland, and the toughness of farewell of his only daughter, "Shirin". for these two crossfires paradise was created.

Every time he heard about ISIS deeds with kidnapped women and selling them for fifty dollars, he felt fires were set up in his heart imagining his daughter ransacked, raped or slain.. he eventually shuddered as if frost entered through his bones. He trembled due to his soul frost.

He contemplated the door which did not open yet, in order to make power to enter through windows ready for the sun.

He sat talking to himself about the terror of what he imagined:

" It's a catastrophe, the catastrophe that they would have raped and tortured my daughter!"

Wasn't that silly to infringe our women and land, oh my fair God... your just rule, oh Lord!

"Kofan" and her husband," Hafal" heard the story of the Yezidi girl who fled, and with the help of the Labor party,

which fight against murderers and criminals, after ISIS had kidnapped her, and God gifted her new life again. Kofan hoped that her daughter," Shilan" was the girl who accompanied the Yezidi girl, as the reported news which was circulated through newspapers.

She was narrating the story to her neighbor, and her eyes were full of tears, about the kidnapped Yezidi girl:

" When "Sulaima" reached to a house at the Syrian Iraqi borders after ISIS kidnapped her, one of the kidnapper received a phone call ordering him and his colleagues to leave the house to another place. after the lorries set back away, silence prevailed she heard a girl's voice moaning of thirst.. she realized she was not alone."

" That girl was moved from her village in Sinjar area to be presented as a gift to a terrorist on the front line... and it was decided that she would declare her Islam, and to get her married to him... The girl was brought from the displaced people camp.

When they released her, she was terrified, and she did not know what to do. She tried to lose the other 12-year-old girl's bonds, and she came closer to her to be together if the thought of fleeing. The passage was dark with stinking smell spreading out of it. The chain that tied the girl with was tied to a damaged piece of wood so that it was easy to take it out.

She lowered her head a little, and her body relaxed horribly... her hands and feet got cool in dreary weather with clouds and coolness... Quietly and fearfully, she extended her neck to see the street, and she walked slowly lest she made any sound. When she did not find any trace of the kidnappers, she and her tied-up-with-chain colleague hastened to the nearest house, and they asked help from the house owners.

They asked how they could reach the border, the house owner showed them the way leading to the camp that could protect them, where the fighters of the " Kurdistan labor party" were fighting ISIS's terrorists. He also told them that the Party would help them to reach safe place."

All of the people listened carefully with pain and joy to the narration of " Kofan" about the story which all people were telling, and that story reached finally to the village after a while of time.

She settled back in her sitting when she saw the speechless indignation on the faces, and the questions on the eyes to hear more.

They walked quickly fearing from what might come, and what would happen if the ISIS terrorists found them again... It would be one termination: slaying or burying them alive! Death was death, even if they created new ways!

"Sulaima" pretended courage but her heart was trembling, and she encouraged herself and her colleague whenever she felt her bleeding feet letting her down due to long walking on the rough terrain without shoes.

After hours of walking, they heard shooting sounds. Approaching to the source of sounds, they saw a group of the Labor Party fighters. They ran toward them, crying and laughing at the same time because they did not believe they were free... "Sulaima" raised her head up when she felt her strength, and victory was glowing inside her.

Thinking only that she was not there anymore, she felt she had the right to celebrate her victory. She got rid of that black deeply dark room, the fear of assault on her or killing her, and the death echo that resounded among the walls.

When "Sulaima" lost her family after ISIS had captured great areas of north Iraq and Syria, A lot of people of the areas fled fearing of killing and slaying because ISIS considered them unbelievers, and it was lawful to slay them and to capture their women.

They kidnapped with "Sulaima" hundreds of women and children... They sorted women and departed them from the children, elderly people, and they got rid of them to unknown places. Later they buried them alive with the children especially babies... As for girls from the age of seven and up, they gathered them in one place until their

turns came for selling them as slaves, or raped them and enjoying themselves with them!

One of the listeners put his palms on his ears:

" I can't hear more of these news which make hearts bleed."

While they were meeting, "Bahar", the village man of wisdom, returned back from his field. The talks attracted him so he sat on a doorstep beside "Hafal", and he started to talk to them about what he knew about the Yezidis, and their sufferings.

"Um Joan" stood as if she were stung by a snake:

" Would God we can talk about peace, love and safety instead of death, ruination and rape. Would God we really regain our daughters and sons from the oppression and tears!

We have to do something. Get up and write ways of salvation. Look at the sky, and don't look under your feet."

She said that firmly in a more vigor voice than before:

" Yes, If we don't change ourselves, we don't have the right to live!"

Then she returned to implore tears with heartburn loss again:

" I'm also like you. Only chat and disappointed hopes, Woe!

What we would tell about treasons in Al Mosel, or about ISIS dreadfulness with arbitrary slaying of our sons and the whole country... Slaying the land is more painful than slaying a neck!"

She walked progressing a step, and retreating the next step, frowning of pain which squeezed her hands and legs and what remained of her pretty face features.

A young lady asked her about her destination, but she stared in her face, and did not answer, and she settled for whirlwind inside her soul that trembled her violently.

A deep scream flooded out of her chest, therefore, life became useless that time.

It was feeling of death in each moment, and how death came suddenly from a bullet, or a shell, or an ISIS man who was a slayer!

The situation called pathos, and the status was so unfortunate... Thus young men, children and old men lost.. at a glance, they turned into only ashes.

Every time, she felt increasing tension, as she lived terror, or heard it from the others every day...except for the (blessed) spikes, she could not bear the death ghost.

For a long time, she stood by to receive something suddenly came to her mind, the scene of the dead in the streets, a great many dead crossed her that moment:

" What will happen if ISIS knew about the spikes? Will they kill our joy with them?"

Certainly they would! In their ill-minds, killing joy in the eyes was not a crime, and they were not guilty if they did that.

She put her hand on her chest drawing the shape of the Cross:

"Was that inevitable? To whom should we complain?"

She continued her soul eeriness turning back to her house.

**The darkness was dense,
should we live it in order to see the ground?
If we saw it,
should we look for the plant
which did not bloom yet to wake it up?**

=====

"Hafal" talked putting his hands in the pockets of his black baggy pants the way the stabbed person who withdrew his sword from the inner of his soul:

" Thus happened suddenly in Al Mosel, curfew was imposed, and people stayed in their houses in a full sleep without knowing what was coming.

And when the people asked why, the reply was " security reasons".. suddenly there was a crowd which no news heard about it... ISIS crowded after they had arrived on the board of modern planes.

The officials in Baghdad were informed to take action to avoid the danger. The next day, skirmishes happened between the police and the ISIS forces. On the right side of Al Mosel, there were sounds of shelling and mortars. The situation continued day and night, and the mortars demolished the houses, and a lot of families died eventually. The left side of the city did not reach it but sounds.

The families started to depart the city walking on feet to the other side of the city. They were exposed to shooting to the extent that they left their wounded sons due to disability to hold them up... some of them were obliged to bury their dead in the houses gardens because they could not take them to hospitals because they were destroyed as well as the neighboring hotel and the houses.

The Iraqi army was not enthusiastic . They used only mortar shelling which damaged only the people and their houses. But the Iraqi police fought honorably.

The refugees were under the tragedy burdens and the terror of surprise so that their hearts bled. They walked aimlessly after life, the army and conspirators had let them down...They walked amidst the summer hot accompanied with a hail of bullets, thirst and fatigue... They did not find water nor help but when they reached their relatives on the left side... after the withdrawal of the army under commands from their leading officers, they felt frustration, deception and fatigue.

From decampment to another, decampment toward Dhok past many controls, crowds and long queues of the fleeing and deserters.

In this situation, no escape of existing opportunists who benefited of the tragedy of the others by exploiting their needs to hire flats in doubling prices, and in dollars, three or four times the real prices. On the other side, there were

some families who opened their houses doors for the refugees, and the others set camps and helped them.

Resentment grew greater whenever the hail of bullets increased, and bread and water became less. The equation lied in the need for a substitute army, or substitute leaders instead of those who failed in their battles against terrorism, or they might help terrorism for personal, racial or sectarian interests. Iraq was in bad need of honorable stances from all the people.

Azad shook his head and hands mockingly:

" Isolation is better than conveying useless chats and opinions of the others... the problem is not fearing or escaping from oneself, but it is a searching about our lost selves. If I was not like you when you seek for speech, I would not isolate myself looking for Azad who lost... lost with his daughter.

He walked away with heavy burdens and pain.. fresh pain.. thus he felt it fresh until he might find what was lost from him. Then he turned to them continuing his speech afar:

" The coming is greater, so watch up your doorsteps, you may not find but empty spikes. I wonder how many spikes were in the open among the Yezidi children's feet while they were exposed to coldness on the top of the mountains?

Then he raised his hands for invocation:

" My Lord, No savior but You, I don't need but Your Help, stormy winds will kill us all, Do not Make Your resurrection now, We're in bad need for peace and security for the sake of Your messengers and prophets."

His old neighbor walked to his house with a walking stick trembling among his fingers:

" It's the message of the heaven that the Dooms Day is approaching!"

Azad returned to his companions because he did not admire what the old man said:

" Come on.. Rebel against everything, Revolt for your own sake, and for the sake of Al Mosel, be salvation.. you're the existence itself."

He walked extending his hands in the air, like one who was looking for a hope or a promise in it.

Everybody returned back to his house waiting for his lovely-to-his-heart spikes, and waiting for a new fable spreading by the air on the tongues of the villagers.

The hope became almost nil or entirely nil for all the people. Therefore, how long and how tough those days were for them. Despair haunted Al Mosel people, who were stunned by the terror of what had happened.

How did the idea get into the minds of the village people, (the Idiot)!!

He used to hear and see more than they did, and he used to approach from what was happening, and from their spikes unknown to them...

The more they dwelled in description of the terror of the tragedy, the more sadness of the flute rose up... creating new harmony that might find her.

The calamity sometimes shone up like the sun, from here the holes of the melodious flute were trembling, and from here, the questions came out:

" Why is the death? Where's my love " Shirin"?

I wonder in which hole is she now, or in which mass grave is she in? , and which sharp cutter parted her, or beheaded her?

(The Idiot) .. are all the idiots like me?

The explosion, the executioner, the slaughterhouse, The last bullet, and the memories: Where can I find them?"

Thus was his flute in the night, and these idiot questions as they titled him.

He laughed in a low voice for (Take the wisdom from the mouths of the idiots) Then the voice of his laugh rose highly:

" Now, I'm a wise man, ha.. ha.. ha, I'm a wise man"

He lay on the ground holding his flute, and covered by the cold air, and the insects' noise, and under the lights of the

street light posts. He started to play and his fingers were dancing on the flute holes, he blew in it the sadness and losing to become the warmth of the spikes.

And like one who came out of grey vestibules, he started to sing in a low voice:

" What happened to the people

What happened to the time"

The boy stuck his body to him, discovering the warmth of his song, looking at and smiling to his face.

He withdrew a pile of the firewood, and he ignite fire in it, and they approach to the fire extending his hands over the fire and then joined them to his chest silently... Silence was the lord of that moment... their dense silence and waiting for the spikes' owners... and the sanctuary.

Chapter Three

Your drowsy eyes, your storming eyes,

where can I find them?

Your beauty seems to be found in a blind place...

The flute has two eyes,

I have the intimacy of the ages in them,???

A few marks are not fluent in screaming.

=====

In Al Mosel, most families were obliged to leave their houses, fleeing from ISIS aggression. They had built their houses with their hard efforts, with the sweat of their foreheads, and with their hopes through years.

All people heard with the murder of Christians , Yezidis Moslems, and Shabaks, as well as burning the churches. ISIS terrorists' hands never trembled while they were unearthing the graves of the prophets... even the tombstones had never been saved, They also demolished them with their feet and flattened the earth, and threw down the crosses of the churches, kicking them with their feet, and they wiped down their beards to satisfy their thirst for revenge. It was ethnic cleansing, just to quench their revenge with that prestigious ancient city.

The angle hovered around the demolished Assyrian ruins, and set a great scream. At the time of filling and flattened

them, another screams were set up... up as an ecclesiastical hymn while they were burning the books and rare scripts in the museums.

The clamor of anger and moaning filled the area, and the angle passed around the sleeping beasts who were tired of demolishing, plucking the hair of their beards and moustaches, as if they were drugged because they seemed they did not feel pain. The angle blew on them from his breaths... and because he was accustomed to be pure and immaculate, he did not wish to transfer the spirit of evil to himself.

Grief and sorrow were common in the hearts... people lost confidence in the government as if it was their daily food... wherever they moved, they felt humiliation.

Their homeland was deporting from place to another place. .. How come the Iraqis became refugees in their own homeland!! That was unforgiveable insult.

Sometimes, Rumors brought joy about cutting some of the ISIS terrorists' fingers, and about others whose hands and legs paralyzed while they were demolishing the tombs of the prophets and the ever-patronizing patrons of Allah.

Dust spread everywhere, whirlwind was rising dust and torn paper, and raging pain in all the Iraqis' chests.

Despair and pessimism were drawn on the faces close to demolishing, or that they had seen on TV, or heard of its news.

The schools, universities and common life were closed, but The voice of the angle and the sound of the flute never stopped.

With the approach of the frost, they lived in tents which were set up over hastily in Arbiel, Kurdistan of Iraq... children and women were at the edge of illness, destitution and coldness. At the same time, their palaces were under looting by ISIS who pretended religion and its allowed and not allowed! They considered the sexual pleasures even without ethics or religion, even practicing sodomy was considered as need and war necessity!

Their leader, Al Baghdadi declared that it was lawful to behead the apostate, to apply (an eye for an eye), and the amputation of a thief's hand.

They applied that on a boy in Syria because he stole some bread for his hungry family after his father was slain by the murderers of ISIS. They crowded in the shape of circle, and started to recite some of the Holy Quran versus. The boy's age was less than fourteen. The boy was writhing in pain between the fear and the suspicion of the others' eyes from terrified onlookers, when somebody of ISIS came forward and stroke his hand with a sword, but the hand did not cut, but started to massage it until it was torn in pieces!

That night, the boy dreamed with a young lady kissing his hand on the place of amputation, she also wetted his forehead with the flower water bending on his chest.

He woke up with a rested heart, and said to his colleagues:

"I wish they amputate my other hand so that I can see my beautiful girl!"

They were surprised of his delirium, so one of his closest friend asked him:

" Are you in love? Or this is hallucination of fear and bleeding?"

It was brutal unethical intolerance : sex, money and women were their motives to attract murderers from the Arab countries, and from different countries around the world.

They did not seem they believed in any ideas or religion, not even any historical or religious symbols. In fact, they were psychopaths with obvious ignorance in religion.

Every time a tombstone was broken, or a killed one was buried, they found by his/her grave beautiful spikes with bright color as if they were already picked up.

Nothing was to heal the families' rancor of the killed ones and the refugees but to open the file of Al Mosel collapse , and to call the military leaders for investigation.

Everything was strange to them as they were climbing the rugged mountains looking for safe shelters. All eyes were away from them, even the air did not know how their fearful hearts were pulsing as if from wild animals, or from snakes and wild dogs... but when a sudden nap confused

their eyelids, they woke up to find a spike beside every ones' heads.

"Samira" was one of the Christian refugees, who liked the top of the mountain. Therefore she always used to stand toward that top as if she were talking to it, or chanting to the soul of the high mountain to solve the riddle which infected Iraq to the extent that Iraq could not decode its code!

Whenever she approached to her crying mother with lamentation, she said to her:

" Don't cry Mom, I feel some coming hope which would change all things, and rearrange them... Raise up highly your hands to become the song of mountains and steeps, and let that song be a witness of the age crime... Your hands, Mom, will become immortal.

Raise them up to let the mountain read the missing word among the zigzags of your hands.

We will be all the days, its daylight and its darkness... Thus we'll start our new march, and you'll tell what was never be told, and they'll believe what was the unbelievable.

I don't know where or when, but soon they'll write our names on the school boards... everything could be stolen but the revenge for honor which will not return but with a revenge.

"Samira's" mother tied her shawl around her head firmly, thinking that would reduce her headache. She heard voices of playing children, so she directed her face toward the sky:

" My Lord, isn't there a solution to this problem?"

"What is the guilt of those children, they're your lovers, O Lord!"

The flute words were the song which never been recited by the throats yet, so he would continue to play it, and to dream even if he were (Idiot)!

He used to appear at night, and to see, despite the darkness, the reality of the angle whereas the daylight came to them obediently but they never saw that!

The behavior was blind, and the crowd was blind, and the hatred was blind ,too... it was impossible for them to see who sold their homeland and the honor like damaged goods.

The keys of the houses doors of the village rusted, and holes leaked to the doorsteps of the houses, and the insects sneaked like bridges making their new features, and spread in all the places from direction to another.

**The thieves enter the holes of the keys,
And drink life water,
And leave them as a banquet
to the garbage.**

=====

" Samira's" mother's means became invocation, after she directed her face toward the mountain, to its high summit which became the hopefulness.

Whenever the night got up to spread its braids over the feet of mountains, Samira's mother heard invocations coming with the wind... her body trembled of cold and bitter cold. She saw a waterfall as if it were a water light on the water lure playing while the angles were passing with a random movement like the singing of a canary with their pink bright clothes.

A young lady filled the place with strange perfume. The light emission increased whenever the perfumed wind passed by its edges of her dress, or her beautiful treed shawl. The light spread over all the sleeping people on the rocks who took the rocks as billows and shelters.

Samira's mother asked herself:

" Why does this light disappear when I join my arms to my body? Is it my invocation coming as a divine signal to me?"

When the light passed from her, she felt heaviness on her shoulders, and jolting in all her organs. Whenever she smelled the distinguished scent, terrible silence penetrated her, it was her favorite perfume which she had chosen from tens of perfumes in a shop owned by their neighbor " Abu Naeem" to become later her eternal perfume which she never changed despite of twenty years had passed since she had chosen it.

I wonder why the light chose her favorite perfume to pervade in all the place! And why the pink color became a dress for a female shape would pass on the summit, and why the shawl was similar to her shawl presented to her by her husband on the first wedding day for them.

He asked her whether she was still keeping it before his leave to the street and died by an ISIS terrorist.

They wildly used to pass the city spreading their barbarian deeds, driving cars with guns shooting their bullets to all directions , and to anything passing the streets to make him/her fall down imbrued with their blood.

They were spreading terror in Al Mosel city, picturing videos of themselves to post them on the Youtube and other website of social media in order to increase horror.

They were mercenaries obsessed by killing and terrifying others... mercenaries who were brought up at the hands of Arabian and foreign entities to burn Iraq and Syria, to kill originality and history extended between the two countries.

" Will she be absent , I wonder? Or will she come back with the same scent and the same shawl?"

With these queries, the woman overcame the desolation of the place, and the miserable existence between invocation and awaiting the unknown coming from the top of the mountain summit.

But whenever her lovely color, and its perfume appeared to her, she would sleep happily and peace of her mind. And when she got up, she would find spikes by the big rock where she used to rest her back on it.

Every night, she used to collect the spikes to make a bright bouquet out of them until the bouquets increased, and their wilt became less.

One morning, they found the temperature of "Suad's" son, the widow's son, was high, frothing and his nose was bleeding. The fugitive (from killing) young woman's milk dried due to the sudden shock, and the cold, fatigue, fear and long walking on the rugged mountains.

She sat in her house courtyard nursing her baby, and her husband was preparing himself for prayer. His mother and her daughter were cooking food. Three of ISIS terrorists

entered the house, and raped the girl, killed the mother and her baby. After they had raped the girl one after the other, they killed her and got out... they did not kill Suad, but they killed her older son when he entered suddenly coming back from school with his ten-year-old sister... they raped the little girl, and killed them both! the house became a pool of blood. "Suad" could hide herself and her baby inside the oven in the back courtyard so that they could not reach her.

Since then, the baby turned thinner, she nursed him what remained of her dry glue-like milk. She also used to feed him of what she could uproot of the fruit of the roses and flowers blooming among the rocks. "Samira's" mother gave her some of what she had of dried bread which she had carried in her bale before displacement.

"Samira's mother hoped to climb to the mountain summit, but the way was so hard and rugged, her hope remained every night after her invocation and prayer in drawing the cross on her chest... the hope remained connecting on the wind robe.

The baby died leaving the bereaved young lady in a state of madness: she never slept, and never ate, wishing to commit suicide slowly, questions increased and grew in her mouth; different and similar, silent and berserk questions:

"all babies resemble my baby. His hand doesn't leave my hand... here are his fingers wet like dew, I nursed him

yesterday, and he slept... he's sleeping .. Don't worry, Why are you crying?"

" On all the rocks, I saw his face... my baby grew and became faces. Then she cried screaming:

" I miss your existence, my little baby, you were the only living being of my family.. Why did you leave me so quickly? Why , my little baby, did you run away from the mountain wind, from old and disabled women, from their walking sticks, and from me?"

" Why.. why? why is the question sour in my mouth!"

Whenever she closed her eyelids forcibly, "Samira's mother saw a light descending from the mountain summit surrounding the young lady, " Suad", and passing her so swiftly, and when her tears flew without crying, there was a mysterious hand crossing the pink valleys wiping "Suad's" forehead, then, everything disappeared within an eye blink.

Some people said "Samira's" mother became mad. Others said she was a blessed woman who never let her prayers in the church, and she never got tired of lighting candles near the statue of "Virgin Marry".

As she imagined that the woman with the pink treed shawl was the "Virgin" herself.

As it was imagined for her that the woman with the pink shawl was the "Virgin" !

She called a lot of invocations for her, and implored her to end up her own ordeal, and the ordeal of her homeland looking for a place where she could be liberated from her grieve, and never found it in the holes of the rocks.. She wished to get out of her own self to shake off all pains that attached to her, and to choose a new self which never experienced displacement, mountain crawling, tears, hunger, coldness, homelessness, and horror of the unknown.

"Samira's " mother was truthful in her speech about the angle because she was a righteous wife, and a mother of a beautiful daughter and a son who was slain!

Whenever she saw a child whose feet bled by rocks, she would cut a piece of her shawl and tied them... blood became frequent here and there... and old men and women became more frail.

One night, she was surprised by a seventeen-year-old young man approaching from her and talked to her in a low voice.. although, he was jesting a little lest she felt fear, he complained of severe stomach ache.

Before he could continue to describe his condition, he fainted for several minutes. When he regained his consciousness, he tried to talk but he could not, and his strength and memory let him down. He was looking at the faces but never recognized any one of them. Things seemed strange to him, even his friends who shared him

departure, and "Samira's" mother also was not recognized to him.

He bled continuously from his mouth and nose...

"Samira's" mother shouted:

" Isn't there a nurse or a doctor with us?"

Nobody replied her... his friends stood around him disparately expecting his death... they stood on the farewell bank, while the young man was bleeding on a bank where his heart pulses were getting away, and his breaths cut.

He ended so quickly, and his life terminated... "Samira's" mother cried sadly:

" According to any rituals should we wash you to bury you, my son? Are you Christian? ..Muslim?...Yezidi? ... Mandeian?

We don't know who you are, may God have mercy on you, May the "Virgin" precede for you. Then she wept profoundly to an extent that she was about to bleed.

Darkness prevailed silently, and wolves parked!

Chapter 4

The anguish is a verses

To be recited...death...

Death has priority

Of reciting.

=====

He wanted to say "No", to have a name referred to by its letters for the others to utter it, to see his mother taking him with his hand to lead him to school like other student in his age, and to know... only to know...

Where from did the ragged-clothed boy get this Arabic dress? It was short for him, over his knees and torn with three holes on the place of his heart! Why were the holes there, and who was the maker of them?

Nobody sympathized with great love like the flute player, and the angle descending from the sky?

They used to walk together. She used to take him to spring and to wash his hair. Then she disappeared putting a spike between his palms.

He used to collect the spikes under a big tree, where she used to pass every night. Then he walked after the traces of her steps silently listening to the fairy tales about the blessed tree.

" A young man and a young woman escaped from stoning of their families to the tree's shadow, and disappeared under it exchanging the kisses of adoration, but the peeping eyes tattled them to the chief of the tribe. Therefore, they tied them to the tree and stoned them to death! The in-love young woman's mother cried blood and with heartbreak because she couldn't reach her daughter. On the other hand, the in-love young man's mother could not come fearing of the people's eyes, and fearing of shame and death.

On the ground, the passers-by fidgeted but the angle who used to aim to the tree taking the boy with him to narrate the fairy tales to amuse him whereas the boy was listening as if he were a monk in pray time time. He often used to cry in a heartbreak in her lap. She deeply felt his solitude and alienation like the flute player. They both shared loneliness and waiting.

The villagers did not know the secret of his absence. And the flute player did not understand sign language, but only he signed to him, and told him about the tree and the angle, as well as the delicious food and cold drink.

With the end of the daylight, facts appeared, and they

Disappeared.

The three of them whispered to the sun to approach, and to be a friend to anybody who wished to be its friend. But They fled when it rose, and they did not look for the fog in the darkness. They might come in the daylight when no one could see them.. or even could see one another... They sneaked to the closed houses keys, and washed the rust off them.

He never ever asked him whether he wished to change his clothes, because he knew him like that, and he did not know when or who made him wear them !

As the days passed, the tree became a shrine of lovers, where they ask to fulfill their wishes. It also became the center of the barren women dreaming to be pregnant. they wiped the branches and the trunk with henna, weeping with invocation especially the women who did not get what they wished.

The angle listened to them , and realized some of their wishes. To the men, the shadow of the tree became like a dome of a shrine ready for their invocations , and the whoops of their wishes.

Whenever the number of the visitors of the tree increased, the boy was afraid for his spikes, so he changed their place to escape from the eyes of the beggars... one time, he tightened them to his chest, and other time, he hid them

under the falling leaves at night, making the leaves piles to cover his spikes.

But nobody stole them, because all the villagers had their own spikes. Besides, they did not know their secrets. They only whispered about them a lot. They guessed and imagined things had no relations to their truth.

Some of them did not care whether they were plenty or few.. they got bored of the myths about them depending on the flute player to know the trove secret within his ribs.

They expected him to lie, more than that, they asserted he lied, and all the stories were woven of his mad fancies.

They felt suspicious of him, and they accepted his nightly appearing grudgingly.

They doubted his sayings and deeds. They even expected him to be a spy of certain entity on their village. Though he never hurt anybody involving to his solitude and flute... looking for something lost from him.

He tried hard to prove his righteousness, and the word "Idiot" which the Mayer of the village, who had a black walking stick ended by a snake's head, titled him.. none of the Mayer's relatives died or killed by any one!

Was not he their son? Did not he live among them for years? Nobody of the families' individuals titled him with such a title! Then why now did they accept the title of the Mayer?

It was expected that the Mayer was conspirator with ISIS. Where from did he build a palace whereas all the village houses were so simple and humble, subjecting to restoration every spring beginning to become ready for the coming tough winter.

The Mayer was miser and greedy who adored money fooling and deluding the villagers to get their money in order to achieve some things for them in the city, or to ask some officials in the government about a prisoner son, or a kidnapped girl.

When the human being suffered of anxiety moments which sneaked from his breaths with the wind into the grass, weeds and wild roses of the ground...These made the questions spinning in the mind of nature including the ordinary human being, such as workers, farmers, street sweeper, night watchmen and garbage cleaners.

"Nairouz" remained looking toward the flute, addressing the watchman:

" Look toward the "Idiot", What do you see?"

" I don't see anything." The watchman replied.

He closed his eyelids and opened them firmly, looking for what "Nairouz" had seen.

The time of the angle revelation approached, so the flute , player and the boy appeared. With the angle revelation the sky spilt into thunders and lightening, and a long black snake surrounded the village.

The daylight broke up, and the houses started to shine up by the new spike shining.

The event became the daily chat. They reported the news of the snake's appearance, surrounding the village, and the storm which jerked violently the trees, falling their green leaves.

In the meantime, TV stations broadcasted a story about a young man in his 23, who died under the torture of ISIS, by cutting his two palms and feet, then slaughtering his body and throwing his body to stray dogs due to disobeying his ISIS terrorists to change his Christian creed... the meanest deeds was to circumcise him without anesthetization. The next day, they slaughtered him to be a lesson for the other Christians and Yezidis.

When the smell of life and consciousness vanished,
Nothing remained but the smell of death.

"Nairouz" uttered that after he had heard the news, then he cried for the status of Iraq, its soil and people.

The watchman did not admire what "Nairouz's" said:

" Is there still consciousness, my brother?

Where did our rulers come from, and what black consciousness made them!"

"They made us wish the olden days... It's true the saying " we accept the bitter status lest more bitter one comes",

and here we are.. we didn't accept the bitter, and we witness more bitter, and we'll see more.."

" We stood at the edge of death. We get out, and we don't know whether we'll be back to our families, or a bomb car is waiting us!"

**Does God create these people
Like all his creatures?
Or do they come thus
In the shape of massacres?
How can the God's hand be
The hand of the murderer
And the dead man's neck?**

=====

He manifested alone with his defenseless flute but from her love... and his friendship to a mute boy. His story with "Shirin", daughter of " Khallat" whom he adored madly, made him a hostage of waiting and seeing.

As she was caressing his moustache, he saw among her fingers his whole life! He found a universal happiness when he passed his fingers through her hair when the light glittered.

They pledged each other to love one another to death, and agreed that nobody would know their

secret until what they had wished for their great love come true. He used to see her as the beauty of his life, and the most beautiful painting could be ever painted by an artist, because she was greater than all the realms of colors...How could a painter picture tranquility and assurance in her eyes when she threw herself in his lap?

What man was he when he granted tranquility !!

He ought to be the sky and the earth to include her... or might the God planted all the existence in his lap.

His great love to her, and his overwhelming jealousy made them in a constant dispute and amity, but they knew well the depth of what was pulsing among their ribs, and what their souls carried at the real moment of meeting... the moment when nothing stopped, to both of them, their embracing, not even the gentle breeze could pass through their adhesion.

One dispute, she decided to volunteer in the "Peshmerga" army to fulfill her aim in killing a big number of the terrorists who appeared in their peaceful world!

She did not ask him advice for her decision, She might mean to flee of her lover's suspense and thoughts! Sometimes love might kill the lover, so I fled from killing to killing.

She did not even tell her father that she had connection with soldiers, nor did she ask him his opinion about her sudden decision.

When her father woke up, and he did not find her , he became mad. He asked about her all the villagers, but he did not get a true answer. As for the flute player, he hastened to their sacred tree, where they used to meet, under its shadow, the tree of all lovers. When he did not found her, he felt as completely lost, and emptiness of his days, deprived from all the beauty pleasure. So he turned to his flute playing, and looking for his voice and moans instead of his absent lover.

Nobody called her the fugitive, because the village knew well its honorable girls who could not be polluted with sin, therefore, they comprehended well the way to be volunteers, and they knew its prickly road...

They asked about her among the volunteers, and knew she had introduced her life as a martyr to

defend her homeland territories, and for the honor of the raped women, but her father stayed waiting her to come back, and did not believe what the villagers said. He gasped in tears, and his eyes were ever toward the road, which he knew well in deep soul, but trying to refuse it and keep hope that she might come back in a near day.

As for the player, he did not have stable mind or heart. Despite that, he had to hold firmly with wisdom lest the villagers doubted him, and discovered his adoration to Shirin through his madness.. he had really become mad, the difference was a merciless executer.

He put himself between the canines of blame and reproach due to his big quarrel with her in their last meeting:

" If only I didn't quarrel with her, she would not go away... Yes, the constant quarrel resulted missing! I would have taken more care!"

The moan of the sounding flute disclosed him... His days became a long coffin rolling around him days and nights!

"Hamed" was a young man who was passionately fond of Shirin since the first moment his feet had trodden the territories of Kurdistan when he and his mother were escaping from the unjust of "Al Baath" rule. That time, he was only 17. That happened after the authority had executed his father in its miserable prisons. They had tortured him severely , then they executed him in the morning of "Hamed's" birthday.

His mother escaped with him to her sister's home in Kurdistan. But her sister's husband did not like that spending money for the two new comers because he was so poor. So he ordered his wife to tell her sister to rent a house for them, and to look for a job for "Hamed".

"Hamed" never thought he would have submitted to such physical effort in his young age such as ploughing the ground for poor wages for living with his mother.

His father used to work accountant in "ArRafedain" Bank branch in one of the southern villages. He was simple in appearance, but he was not really that simple. In fact, he was humble but violent with unjust tyrannical people. His soul was connected to

the Communist Party which used to defend for the rights of the oppressed workers and farmers... The images of struggling embodied to him and he adored its thoughts, he was sincere to the party, and he sacrificed himself for it.

Some people said that he died, and a smile was on his face. He left emptiness, and nobody filled it after him. He also caused a lot of pain and suffering for his little family especially the mother who became a widow.

He used to continue touring with the farmers urging them to regain their rights, and not to keep silent about them. At the same time, the farmers in the village loved him. They used to approach him introducing milk and dates at the season of picking fruit and milk. One of the farmers gifted him a flute which he had made with his hands when he knew that he had the talent of playing on flutes, "revelation of the soul" as he used to call them.

Their dreams of salvation were great, so all their meetings were in the cafes at night, and causeries under the moonlight. They did not take into consideration that security men were tucked in to control their movements, and record their talks,

while they appeared to be with them as their comrades!

These what "Hamed's" father said at the last moment before he farewell his son and his wife:

" Beware of the eyes!!"

He had nervous mood, and strong-arm at the same time. .. He continued to repeat in a loud voice:

" Beware of the eyes.. Beware of the eyes, my son. Here you are the flute instead of me. It's your legacy, so don't let it be lost from you."

They noticed his great self-confidence while they were leading him to the prison.

The voice repeated between the sky and the earth... and "Hamed" was listening what they exchanged of similar voices to his father's voice.

The idea entered his mind and crystalized, and it was impossible to know its control over him.

He was confused to choose an idea of playing, departure, the prison, the farewell, mother's weeping at night, neighbors' heartbreak, execution time, and not praying for the corpse and assembling the lamentation pavilion... all that made

him never humiliated any one, nor be unjust to anybody, so he became obscure with his flute soliloquizing the lost father, and after him, the lover " Shirin".

The most loveable man to him was his grandfather of his mother. The old man used to take care of him a lot. He usually brought a blooming plant to him to implant it in the court yard.

His hoarseness of voice enjoyed him when he sang the beautiful " Abbothies " with their effective verse about missing and deprivation written by him, so they had a special rhythms in his soul.

The old man also was the last person to pay farewell for his mother and him, and the last voice left in the south fled from the north, near his aunt who submitted to her husband's will.

And the last eyes were of his little ewe gifted to him from one of his grandfather's friends. It used to run after him quickly behind the car. He felt the blood flooded in his veins while she was looking at him imploringly. He still trembled, remembered her imploring.

Sometimes some looks pierced the soul, and man felt his termination approaching.

It was the eternal darkness landing over the country.. the fleeing hour of the watch hands, did not give any chance for the time to read it, and departing people knew at any minute the destiny would be.

Chapter 5

Thirsty to the utmost extent of thirst

Passion, anxiety, and a river of tunes

Agonizing is the call of flute.

=====

The open of the half-closed door was enough for him to see what was going on in the street, he heard the pedestrians' chats, and the noise and voices of women and children.

He even inserted his head from the door opening to peacefully what was going on, and that took several minutes to see if his heart's lover was among the girls.

Time was not cold. At that moment, his mother went out from her room wearing her elegant clothes ready to go out:

" What's wrong with you, my son? Why are you peeping at the people in the street, go out! Today, all the people have pleasure of Nowruz Day. Let's go.. give me your hand. Let's go to buy some new things.

He remembered his father and his love of life and joy. He never heard him talking about despair or death, or even a whisper of agony. He used to bridle his anger when he ran chasing his fleeing cat from his naughty toughness to his father's lap.

The idea which came to his mind then was the villagers' fond of buying bright decorated clothes. And their adoration of dancing, Dabka and music. These were maybe due to compensate their simple and fading life here!

All people here started up to the laps of nature among the feet of the mountains, and greenness and roses... they spread their colorful rugs, and set their banquet of food, and other delicious staff of what had been given by nature in that month, such as fresh fruit, sweets, and dried fruit as well as delicious kinds of food.

On the rhythmical knocking of drums and tambourines, the bodies of the people started to

sway, and the their balms held each other on the shape of a circle... the shoulders trembled with knocking of rhythms, amidst of the circle, there was a men raising a handkerchief rolling it with his distinctive Dabka... "Hamed" held "Shirin's" hand firmly. He felt strange warmth running from her fingers to his balm, then to his whole body.. he trembled as the lover trembling. In return, the same warmth ran into her balm from his balm:

" Why is your balm warm?"

" Nothing... I feel your balm is warm. I also have felt the fingers of another female holding my fingers... I was confused whether it was you or the other girl... yes, even there passed a dress whish on my chest while I was dancing. It was also warm.. don't you see that weird?

That night, "Hafal" heard knockings at the door at dawn. He was surprised.. who might be the dawn knocker... but when he opened the door, no one was there.. He looked at the two sides of the road, but he did not find anybody. He found a golden spike at the doorstep.

The spikes were left at the doors without discrimination between religions or races.. They

were the same number of the missing people from the houses... When "Hafal" picked up the spike, his features relaxed, while he was walking with his neighbor Priest "Maurice", and the other neighbor "Abo Ali" aiming to casual café in the village:

" He's cursed the person who doesn't feel the beauty of the spikes, and cursed he who doesn't know they're life!"

The Priest asked him surprisingly:

" You've become a poet, today, my brother "Hafal"!!"

" Tell me , father, can't you become a poet while you wake up in the morning after knocks on the door smoothly and calmly to find a spike every morning at the doorstep?"

"The one who owns the key knows the code of these spikes. Why are they spikes definitely? If their owner is a generous man, why won't he put a food diet instead? At least he would close the mouths of the hungry people of the tenants... or maybe some clothes to protect the needy from poverty and cold." The Priest replied.

" I smell a riddle behind these spikes. Maybe they are a divine message to us to move and plant them to feed the ground with our efforts and love instead of killing, slaying and infighting for nothing. For what, oh, my Lord! For what..?" "Hafal" said.

"Maybe there is a certain call for us through them... you, unknown, why don't you approach to us and appear, we'll say "safety for you and around you", but don't let us confused of your spikes" Hafal continued.

When they arrived the café, the priest left them aiming to the church which was not far a lot from the café. They agreed to meet in the Priest's home at night to continue their speech about the spikes, and to decode the riddle of their secret.

They had an idea of watching up alternately as volunteers, young men and old men, to control the doorsteps of the houses... but Hafal objected interrupting the rest of them:

" We should keep that as a secret, and make the control extremely secret known only among us. Each one of us has his own turn to watch one night. We should not bring the spike owner's attention. He might not come again if he knew he was under

control by us... Let's tell the Priest when we would visit him tonight. He might have other ideas.

Life became a whirlwind, even the sun.

Everything connived to dig graves,

And suffocated the dreams...

The enemy continued to snap madly

=====

The young boy "Bewar" did not ever imagined he might sleep even for one night at the feet of the mountains, and not in his mother's or father's lap. To him, days were counted on his fingers, therefor, he memorized them well... He used to talk with the days, and court them before he went to school.. Sunday was the most beautiful day of the week, Monday was annoying to him because he hated the history lessons. Tuesday was the day of learning how to swim after the lesson. Wednesday was sport namely football game which he adored, and learned from his father who was hanged without knowing why! Somebody told him that his father was hanged , and his mother died of sadness after the end of the funeral... their grieves were pleasure to the ISIS!!

Whenever they heard sounds of crying, or saw eyes full of tears and blood spilt, their features relaxed , and they exchanged congratulations!

Thursday was the music lesson, and Friday was holiday, when he picnicked with his family in the park. Saturday was for reviewing the lessons.

Thus he knew the days, and loved them. He did not imagine the school without the days, and the days without a cover to protect him from coldness.

Bare-footed, he walked among the rocks of the mountains and the valleys accompanying the families departing with his grandfather or his father who got tired of hard walking, and died on the way... He did not bear the hardness of his disease, overcome by coughing and diabetes rising, there were no hospitals nor medicine.

The boy became alone, pitying himself and warming himself. All the others were occupied with themselves, or taking care of their children and families except for him!

When his foot slipped on a smooth rock, and he was about to fall, a stranger's hand held him without seeing it, but he felt it touching his fear, and cooling down his terror, he was held firmly to the extent that he felt the breaths of the woman who held him.. he was about to see his mother in the smoothness of the touching and hugging.. He cried aloud to the whole group:

" Don't be afraid! She held me and save me!"

"Who is she?"

" I don't know! She has blond braids, I saw her as a ghost who saved me and disappeared!"

The majority thought the boy had fever of coldness, and the others expected that he needed his mother then he fancied her!

But the boy insisted on what he had said although no one believed him... on the mountain foot, pain grew, and hopes and dreams died.

How would life be here without joy or security?!

All of them thought of their coming life, how it would be, and who would stay alive before they arrived to the camps northern Iraq.

Would the dreams stay as they were, or would they die here on the rugged feet?

Everything became difficult even smiling, they were in a bad need to only a smile which might restore their balance.

The refugees paid hard efforts to remain alive.

Trembling toured the boy's body again, he shook like someone who was stung by a scorpion:

" It was her! I swear to God.. It was her , believe me. She shook me firmly , and I heard her whispering in my ear: "Hold yourself, and be strong!"

Why don't you believe me?"

An old man, who was too tired, advanced to him. His feet were hardly leading him to the boy:

" You're not an ordinary boy, how old are you?"

"Ten years old, grandpa"

" Then, you're not a child, so don't let fancies take you so far! Here no angle passes by! We're not in the era of angles, if we were really in their age, we would not reach here!"

" But I never see a monster to say we're in the era of monsters, I saw her as if it were a nymph of the paradise nymphs."

" But how can you recognize the paradise nymphs? Have you ever seen them before?" (laughing)

" Then you don't believe me!"

The boy left him and resorted to a big rock to protect himself with it.

" Rocks became our affable, and our ribs shelter!"

" Aren't we a stigma on the humanity forehead?"

A fifty-year-old man replied her. On his face, pain and tiring prevailed, his pants and shoes were torn of long and continuous walking among mountains and valleys:

" Which humanity are you talking about, Madame? And about which joy remained in our chests?"

Joy was no longer doubled because we did not share it, and we did not introduced it as a gift to all of us.

Where is that good neighborhood, when we feel pain together, and we feel the pleasure of all of us, and we know what the neighbor would say without utterances!

All these were lost, or stolen from us in order to go astray... We were in need to each other, and how happy we were when we need each other... Yes, all my speech can be far from reality now, but it is true! The Iraqi used to live for the others before himself."

A woman shook her shoulders, and said:

" We were... We were..."

Sorrow and sleeping overcame the eyes of young woman stuck to her father, depriving what remained of his strength to cool down her trembling hands and feet due to coldness and fear... even if her eyes had abnormal glittering, but now she was daughter of fear.

"Tamara" was a 16-year-old girl. She had a fascinating beauty, especially her eyes. Therefor her family was anxious for her from the ISIS criminality.

Her father used to accompany her to school, and returned back when the lesson ended.

One day, her father was ill, and "Tamara' returned home on foot. A wild ISIS terrorist got in her way, and dragged her to his car, and he raped her. Then he gave her to his

colleague , the driver, while she was screaming and imploring them not to slay her... to them, slaying became amusement of boredom, or sexual lust and eroticism which were for them so easy to do... all the country and its people were allowable to them, not only women.

The two ISIS terrorists quarreled about her. Each one wanted to keep her for himself to enjoy himself with her body. For this reason, they did not slay her.

"Al Mosel" was no longer Al Mosel, and the homeland became an enemy to itself, and people ate each other!

They repeated practicing sex with her alternatively, and they quarreled again several times ending by shooting one of them the other with bullets and insults.

She was lucky , here, to run away very quickly to her house. She was stained with blood!! Her father turned to be mad when he saw her, he took her to the hospital to be treated, but due the horror of the shock, she became mute!

She deported ,with her illness, with her family, and her voice remained waiting imprisoned. The two kidnappers talked a Pakistani language, and their pants referred to their identities, they died for the sake of their mean enjoyments, and "Tamara's" voice died, also.

Thus the Gangrene came to body of the homeland, and its eradication turned to be obligatory.

There were blue eyes, pants and turbans, drunkards and Hashish addicts, cutthroats and homeless, enemies of their people and homeland allied with those of the ISIS to spread Gangrene in Iraq. They did not come from void, they are the remnants of the ex-rule, those were prisoners of murder who were set free by the ISIS to slay Iraq, its territories and its people... ISIS now conquered with their military experiences, and knew the places of ammunitions, and the country topography. These criminals were the leaders and the planners to burn Iraq.

Chapter 6

**To get the trees leaves,
there must be a blooming melodious tune,
To make the tear touch a dreaming star,
There must be a tune.**

=====

One morning, "Shirin" talked to her friend, " Ronahi" about "Hamed" ecstatically of the flowers to the nectar. "Ronahi" asked her about her response to "Hamed's" love from the first initiative toward her:

" "Hamed" is like a bird! When the birds immigrate, he thinks of me. And when they return, he thinks of me. There's no tree but me to shelter to!"

They walked and the ruffles were shaking with their slow walk on the grass and shining wild roses.

They saw a young man looking at them stealthily, but his eyes were aiming at "Ronahi", attracted to her beauty magic, and her sober walk.

They sat on the grass catching glance like him, but "Shirin" was surprised of alternating looks between the two.

"Ronahi" spread her finger on the wet grass caressing it. The grass was wet ecstatic of dews. She felt a hand passing on her heart quietly as if she were planting in it a young plant! And from the depth of despair, wishing flower bloomed!

She wanted to explain what she had felt, but "Shirin" asked her:

" Here you are, my friend, submitting to the female instinct. "

"What's shame in that?"

" Why should we let our faces inlaid with tears?"

" You're a fighter, and you should jump like a fighter."

" But I'm a female, a female , my friend, and you're like me already fall in love, come on confess!"

She concealed inside her all the femininity tricks, and wallowed in grass enjoying to pamper her tiring body... tiring of military training, carrying a weapon and the duty.

She remained silent, discovering what she felt of conflicting reactions.

Like a beauty mare, she jumped wiping her military uniform of what has stuck on it from the grass:

" We don't need love now as we need divine providence to stay alive, and survive from death."

They held each other's hands, and directed themselves to the camp.

(on the other side in the training square.)

"Hamed" was looking for paradise to present it to "Shirin" on the songs of the sad flute... He gave the void of things a new meaning... And then he sang in a low voice:

" How hard to be a ruler... How hard to be a humane,
Two opposites never meet, Never meet the two opposites
Never meet the two opposites."

The volunteer officer, the smart young man, looked at him saying:

" It's disrespect, all peoples are ruled by disrespect people, agents of the dollar who exploit our hard-to-get money, and absorb our life to live in prestige as wealthy people, but we are about to die of hunger, and running away from their authority, and the unjust of their prisons.

They make us stupid, yes, we're stupid, or why do we agree to be ruled by cowards?

I fled from the army of Saddam after I had lost patience from cutting ears to burning the forehead with the sign of

minus for the fleeing soldiers, whereas the "minus" was in them:

" Do you know my friend why they marked the foreheads with sign " minus"?

" They wanted us to be (minus) like them, here they applied equality and justice. imagine!!"

In the camp, there were two trainers, the fugitive officer and "Kazin". Officer "Adel" with Kazin, the leader in Peshmerga, agreed on the training course. Kazin heard one of the trainees saying:

" Why is he so harsh and tough with this violent training?"

" To make you know how to stick to the ground."

But the enemy will drop his bombs from the sky using war plane."

" whatever! But people live on the ground."

Adel turned, and agitation was apparent on his face, to an extent that his moustache ends were trembling. So Kazin patted on his shoulder:

" Let them discuss each other. I'm glad to have accompanying a man who has the strength of a fighter, and has the opinion of a thinker."

His agitation vanished, and he smiled to his comrade's face. They both heard a sound of a flute which was played Sufi tones.

" I like this melodious music" Adel said.

"A humane never misses viewing anything to interpret it to pure tunes!"

" This is a real lover, a lover who sees all things as his beloved. For this he turns them into tunes singing them. How could a player become a fierce fighter with the enemy."

The cold night breezes started to shake the branches and shoots, and to lull the birds sleeping in their nests.

Karin cried:

" Stop! The food have been brought !"

They sat in circles on the cold ground except Adel, who was sitting with them but on a ruined wooden chair.

"Brevan", accompanied with "Rayhaneh" were carrying the food for them. They decided to help the fighters , at least by cooking food and servicing it to them.

One of them put a bite in his mouth quickly, and said:

" The food cooked by the fighting women has a different taste !"

They asked him:

" How does it seem different?"

" It is cooked on the homeland fire, and the love of homeland, and the love of the land, so it will be with the

flavor of paradise... the flavor of the female is only the paradise.

All of them laughed. After a while, they saw "Brevan" whispering in the ear of Rayhaneh":

" Pay attention to "Zayan"! He may have wish to eat food different from this. I see him never approach the rug to eat with the others."

"Do I need to tell me that.. I served him that and I know that he will not eat until the other fighters end up eating. He is carrying on cleaning his riffle as long as they enjoy eating.. I also know other things - hinting to the looks of "Zayan".

" Yes, my friend, How much you're smart! Your hinting belongs to me! I really noticed his interest in me."

" But he's Syrian! And he'll go to fight there."
I'll go with him to the end of the world. Both of us are defending our land and honor."

When " Rayhanah's" face scowled, "Brevan" said:

" Don't rush! Love has been just started, and whatever may happen, you'll remain the my life friend!"

" What I understand is love starts with messages conveyed by the sight."

"Hamed" did not stop playing until they finished eating.

"I wonder about this player how he would act if he became a captive under the authority of these terrorist!"

"Don't afraid my lovely friend, "Rayhaneh", everything dies but the sound of the flute. If a player dies, another will replace him ... the sound remains, and it never dies."

"Shirin" asked the flute player:

" What shall I do if they capture you?"

" Wait for me with all you could of waiting. If the waiting gets tired, accustom it to wait!"

Under the guise of clouds, they finished their diet. After they drank hot tea, one of them said:

" We want nothing but our homeland lives, and we live. That time, we'll create a day never known by the years, or even by hours. We'll make it Victory and human Day.

Getting rid of ISIS, and purifying the land of its terrorists must be a universal Day, because they exceeded all limits of ugliness, barbarity and savagery so that we could not have other description for them.

Killers? Murderers? .. not enough!

Criminals? ..not enough!

Bloodthirsty assassins? .. not enough, too!

Sadists? ... I don't know, all these descriptions when they pass on our tongues, they pass on their swine bodies like a mosquito!"

Places and streets are staggering

Waiting a miracle

The water which reflects its moons

Stained with blood!

=====

"Adel" jumped standing, and looking at the green distance on the mountain decorated with chamomiles and yellow, violet and red roses... He was watching the stars in a half-clouded sky... and "Rayhaneh" was following his lofty tallness, his youth, and his smooth black hair.

She was attracted by his opinions on the rulers, the homeland and his acquaintance of the real patriots as well as the robbers and the malevolent people... She considered his escape heroism.

She did not think that one day she would fall in love, her young heart never beat for a young man previously... she stood close to him, and her eyes insisted on gazing in his

face. She overcame the shyness of the female, and she dared to understand somehow his past:

" Wasn't there a female in your life?"

He picked off a pink flower, and introduced it to her:

"No, my lady, there was no woman but my mother... because I dedicated myself to the homeland, and I belonged to the Communist Party in Iraq... they considered me the worst person because I was fugitive from the army. Others considered me brave because I refused death for the sake of tyrants."

He seemed ready to tell a lot, but suddenly he changed his manners, and kept silent.

He looked at a place that did not determine by his sight. He wanted to escape from "Rayhaneh"... He meant that, but she got closer to him and continued his speech carefully and proudly.

A crowd of birds flew passing by them. This raised deep grief in them as they were following their flying high, the blue sky and the green ground.

She did not tell him about the cause of her interest in him, but the vanity of man led him to follow up a female paying attention to him made him provoke her to tell him what was hidden in her depth:

" You, my lady, have you ever fall in love, or engaged to anybody?"

Her green eyes smiled , and the dream widened her accelerating heart beats:

" No, Never... never engaged..."

She did not complete.. So both of them committed themselves to silence, and their eyes started to plant dreams among the trees.

She talked to herself:

" What's the use of this beating, my heart!

Tomorrow or after tomorrow, we'll die, and the sound of my love will continue to be mute! And his eyes are like blind fremitus.

I have to get rid of these feelings, I was not born for love... the call of the homeland is deeper in my soul than a passing whispering moment!"

She remembered her father, and the fairy tales which he used to narrate to his three children : "Naeem, Riyad, and Rayhaneh".. profound grief prevailed over her soul for missing them.

Her father belonged to a decent family. He brought up them to get the best education, and he taught them the homeland love and dying for its sake... and she inherited from him heroism and sacrifice.

He bought for them a spacious house. The rooms were the same number of the family members, so he got her own

share of the family pampering because she was the only girl between two brothers.

She recalled the naughtiness of her brother, "Riyad" who used to be jealous of her a lot. He schemed snares for her so that she might get one or two slaps on her face from her father! He even sometimes stole her daily allowance, or her pens, or copy books from her school bag without permission. So in the school period she was surprised these things were not in her school bag, and eventually she got punished by her teacher!

When this case repeated, the school complained to her father about his daughter's laziness. She was so clever but she did not do her homework, and she came to school without copy books to get marks on them in order to succeed.. the teacher wondered of her contradicted manner.

Her father knew the causes of the problem, and who was the real guilty. So he made a trap for his son "Riyad", and he caught him red-handed stealing his sister's copy books to hide them under his bed. Therefore, he was severely punished not "Rayhaneh"!

She smiled profoundly to the childhood memories, and her brother's naughtiness.

She paid attention to "Adel's" trembling hand which was holding her fingers, love shivering and warmth ran in her body.

The lights of the camp started to faint, so light became shallow. She held his hand and withdrew it to her:

" We should close our thoughts and return back. We need sleeping to wake up early for training."

While they were returning, they heard the tunes of the flute player. So her soul sang:

" Sing my heart for the shivering of killing, and don't sing for love... Let your moment of adoration to the trees, for seasons will bring it back."

She slid herself in her bed, and took some time to think, but a sudden lull took her after she had relaxed her white body, and surrendered to sleeping.

Like all great dreams, a dream passed on her eyelids. She dreamed with simple house with three rooms, and a living room decorated with her children's photos, and a garden before the house where she planted three saplings which she named them after her children.

In the afternoon, "Adel" used to irrigate the garden flowers, and the jested sprinkling water while the children were playing football.

But the truth woke her up from the dream which she considered annoying despite its beauty and pureness!

It was annoying because it could not come true... there was not a serene house, but fires and death adoration ,bombs and smoke!

She got out of the camp walking calmly lest she would wake up the others. She felt the wet dewed grass, so she refreshed a little of the hope horror... She wanted to make him live inside her heart, but her heart refused that because it was full of another love. And there was no room for a man.

Between a strong and medium wind passed, so it chased her specters, and carried her with it on the wing of time chagrined with bombs.

She found herself living with them again, meeting their demands before getting out to school. She combed their blond smooth hair, and put sandwiches in their school bags with some money... She turned back home to find "Adel" was still there lying in bed waiting her. So their two bodies united in an erotic morning dance.

She heard him calling her:

"None but you, my rose, oh my lover, "Rayhaneh"... She granted him her soul and body, and they absented themselves away from the present awareness in their glowing symphony!

She woke up of her wandering on the voice of "Shirin" getting out rubbing her eyes to ask about her fighting friend's absence:

"Where are you?

I checked your place, and got worried about you..

anything wrong, my friend?"

"Rayhaneh" turned to her evading from a lost hope:

" Nothing! It was an annoying dream, or say a nightmare... a dream woke up to the nightmare of reality, and I have to terminate them, or killing them together... killing the nightmare with a nightmare.

" You're puzzling tonight, Rayhaneh"! Go back to your bed! We have hard training tomorrow."

She looked at her wristwatch... it was five in the morning.
She replied:

There's no time for sleeping, "Shirin".. no time for sleeping!
We did not come here to sleep and dream. I won't dream... I'll delay it!"

".. delay what?"

" No.. no Not the training, but delay the dream!"

" Were you dreaming? ... dreaming with who, my precious friend? Come on , confess! Have you fall in love with "Adel"? I feel he exchanges love with you ,too."

" Are we here to love?"

" Don't chicane yourself! Let's get ready, now, for the coming hour."

That night, the moon was cunning, and the wind was fierce. It did not let her be guided to the heart call, embers

of soul, and the blazing of meeting... Duty was also stronger than the present and future dreams!

Adel had brilliant natures that attracted her to him, but she could not read his thoughts easily. He was a mysterious man when he narrated his escape from the army, and his refusal to die for the sake of his people's killer!

She also found a great pleasure in his wide culture, especially when he talked about freedom and peace, even if they were fighting within a war... his mind was preoccupied with man absolute freedom. He talked about it wondering:

" Is there really an absolute freedom?"

The weather was cold, and the wind was whistling accomplice nastily with the moon, and that gave it a chance growing its fierce teeth.

She washed her body hastily, and drank a cup of tea with "Shirin"... "Adel" was the first to wake up of the fighters. He got out carrying a fax paper in his hand arrived at dawn ... aside, he read its content, but never told anybody about the content.

They all arrived to the determined place of their daily meeting. They also determined the attacking schemes, and the teamwork way, and how to understand the signals of each other in order to be one team understand each other's signals.

The flute player came out tuning his morning with his own morning greeting, he did not throw it on the others, but the sound of his flute did... they paid him the greeting and smiles on their faces.

" The flute is like this, and like this is the song when it was started by a fighting player."

They winded around on the shape of circle, "Rayhaneh's" seat was against "Adel's"!.. her eyes hugged his eyes, melodious music followed them, drizzles fell, and the sky responded to the hearts of all courting their remaining days which could be counted on the fingers.

Adel stood up with his svelte constitution:

" Fighters, listen to me:

We are against criminals raping the properties, souls , and honors, as if they were their legal owners, they had inherited them legally from the Lord!

Our cannons should bang, and never have mercy on any one of them. We won't be stable until we restore our land, and the rights of the emigrants of our people, and our right of living.

His features seemed so serious, and his face was gloomy, a great wrath was squeezing him avoiding "Rayhaneh's" eyes, and he did not let for his heart the right of beating... or he did not show that lest he got weak and made the others suffering weakness.

Then he directed his speech directly to "Hamed", "Shirin", and "Rayhaneh":

" For lighting fires with them, we should cancel our hearts!"

Chapter 7

The light is dancing naked under the rain

But the rush of the wind was wild

Preparing the tombs

To become the bodies' grills,

And a banquet of the fire.

=====

" Adel" suffered of the feeling of pain while he was recording the details of the fugitive soldiers from the military service.

His story of escape from the military service occurred while he was spending his military leave during the Iraqi-Iranian war. His escape was a real miracle. His aunt, "Asmaa" contributed in it. "Asmaa" brought him up when he was a little boy, and he linked to her a lot.

One cloudy day, he got back deadbeat to his house, and he told his aunt that he had no desire to go back to war front! And that he fought for a false victory, and for the sake of a tyrant who adored his crimes and himself!

She put her hand on his mouth to mute him:

"Shut up, my son! Whisper in my ear about your desire... Walls have ears!"

He approached closer to her and his mouth near her ear:

" But my aunt my age is one, so how could I be made it to no use for the sake of a criminal and his assistants?

They're free, and their children enjoy the delicious and luxury staff while we're to die on the front!

Ah my aunt, if only you see what's happening for us, you would escape from your body, and hate yourself!"

" But they would be cauterize on your forehead with (minus) sign. Do you want to be (minus) in the others' eyes?"

" ... (minus) in the others' eyes, but free in the eyes of myself, and my heart, and a rebel with my conscience and my right of life."

" Then... Don't tell your parents. I'll manage the matter."

They decided to escape at night in the train directed to "Al Amara" city. She booked first-class wagon to be away from the others' eyes. They stayed at a poor hotel for two days in a Baghdad suburb.

His aunt went out spending half of the day. Then, she came back accompanying with a man of fifty. He did not utter a word, but he referred to him to get into his car. So they went out leaving his aunt in the hotel. She hugged

him in tears to bid him farewell. She also recommended the man to take care of him without mentioning his name, she asked him to put him in his eyes:

" He's the sun who was not from our offspring.. our dear son!"

This farewell aroused curiosity of "Adel" to know the secret of the man, and his aunt's great trust in him so she chose him to put "Adel" between his hands. Then she addressed him with an accent of great amity!

The two men walked among the orchards taking ways of back streets, away from the control and its problems. Then they entered a big orchard full of palm trees, fruit trees and grapes trees.

The man served food, cold drink, milk and fresh dates, but "Adel" could not keep silence any more:

"Tell me, uncle, are you a relative to my aunt who I don't know?"

" I'm more than a relative! I'm her lover since we were little children. We took vows to get married, or death, but her parents refused our marriage because my origins were not Arabic. So we kept our vows: She refused to marry any one. And here I am not married yet. I live alone in this orchard.

" I'll get you married when the situations become stable"

" First, save your own neck, my son! Then get us married.. we grew older. Now, it's your day.. your wedding day!"

"Adel" decided not to get out of the house until the situations changed. So he remained imprisoned for years. But the uncle felt afraid from an intrusive neighbor, so he agreed with a person to take him secretly to " Dhouk" for a sum of money.

"Adel" surprised that the regiment which would start training today was formed of groups of women including "Rayhaneh", "Brevan", "Shirin" and " Ronahi".

"Rayhaneh' jumped as she was raising her two long blond braids, throwing them behind her back:

" What will we do tomorrow?

You exert a great hard work to train us, especially the women because we did not accustomed to harsh and hard movements, but with willpower, determination for the homeland, and honor, we endure the tiring efforts of training.

We don't know how to reward you for creating strugglers and fighters out of us."

He looked at her eyes , and his heart was full of love, trying not to reveal his true feelings.

He closed his eyes for the first time, then he averted his situation and re-opened them firing away the thoughts passing in his mind.

Sadly, he contemplated them fully, then he smiled:

" nothing remained but a little... a little, and we'll start the attack !"

"Adel" was a svelte-statured young man, with splendid appearance, thick eyebrows, and thick moustache revealed strength and strictness, but among his ribs, there was complaining the soul to the soul.

" were we created for war, or for love?"

His heart complained in a terrible silence...penetrating his lonesome moments.. the solitude of soul with soul and dialoguing with it.

The night passed wet bearing the scent of Nowruz Day, and the villages celebrations with the Day... He casted a cursory glance on everybody, he saw he found something he was proud of... sacrifice sneaked into their hearts, they were not separated, but united in everything, although they were different in shape, creeds, and nation... he saw the seriousness of the girl and women, so he realized that women was not created only for love... and he felt that his heart would have room for everybody.

"Adel's" heart was looking for God in the war... and the queries grew greater in his soul!

" Does God cause wars?"

Why does He create these villains of the human beings?
Why are we the largest redemption for freedom and peace?

Wasn't peace realized but in war and killing to terminate them and say we've got victory?

Is God content with that?

Doesn't he see the refugees, and little children in the camps, cold is eating their skins, and fever eats their bones?

Aren't children the God's beloved creatures, so why does He let his beloved creatures die?

Is that really written on our foreheads? And why are we doomed to be slain at the hands of the ISIS assassins?

Is it a punishment of God?

If ISIS is the life punishment, so there will be no punishment on the doomsday.

He threw his cigarette stub on the grass, and crushed it with his feet. He could not talk after these weird queries, so he turned back to his cigarettes again... he smoked calmly, he turned around himself as if he were a prisoner in his body, he did not feel bored, but looking for answers to his questions.

"What did the Kurds, the Yezidis, the Christians, the Shabaks, the Shias, the Sunnis, the Syrians and the Iraqis do?

What did they do to the Lord to send ISIS birds! ?

Sure, He saw those who died on the fronts, and those who died without medicines!!

Slain people, hanged people, driven to be slaughtered, homeless people and emigrants...the important thing was satisfaction of the enemy of God!

" Are they really the enemies of God"?

Who is their God that they slay people after his name?
They raped women honor after his name? they considered properties, and lands ownerless after His name?

Who granted them this right to control people's necks?
Which religion? Who are they?

Will they enter paradise by beheading people's neck?
Which paradise/ what are its gates? Does it have a enter – exit door?

Oh, my Lord, liberate me from the hell of my questions !
I'm about to get mad! "

These things are enough to turn millions of humans to be mad, How then they are to me as I'm an ordinary person. I think of absent reply , and present questions!

They raise the swords over the neck, and say: "There is no God but Allah!"

" oh, my Lord, protect me from their God and be my Lord.. I'm the honorable fighter who never submitted to a throne, and never destroy a flower, or even kill a bird! Those cowards drove me to their battles to stain my hand with blood!.. to train women to kill, instead of training them to make beauty."

In front of his eyes, images of the war front in the Iraqi-Iranian war has passed before his eyes... soldiers crawling on the ground careless of the jungle snakes and sand scorpions... defeated captives surrounded by muzzles, red eyes, and dusty faces... young men in the age of flowers guided south from other cities to the hell of fires, and rising smokes, while the tyrants' sons at the same of their age touring European and American cities.

Mutilated and burned corpses, corpses without arms, arms without corpses lined in coffins... long queues of corpses they used to pass, and the survival road continued even if it was on the dead!

Helmets stained with mud, eyes escaped out of their sockets... mothers slapping their faces, and wives became widows due to silly wars!

Amputation of limbs was still touring the ground and hills, and once again: the sword and the knife.. stone age circled

the frontiers, and the total world silence, and Human rights organization was mute!

He turned back to his tent. He found "Rayhaneh" waiting for him after she had prepared dinner. That moment, Hamed entered putting his flute under his belt. All of them sat at the food table... Adel was silent all the time. They ate, and drank silently. Then, they got out silently leaving Adel resorted to thoughts they did not know their causes, or what were they!

On their way to the girls' tent, Hamed said:

" What's wrong with the officer? Has he got tired of continuing training, or a certain call came to him, or commands that he didn't tell us about?"

He did not heard an answer to his question, so he kept silent.

Military commands required to distribute the trained groups along the mountain line extended between northern Iraq and Syria. So "Rayhaneh", "Shirin", "Rohani", and "Brevan" shares were to direct their way to (Kobani), while the others stayed with the Peshmerga.

Anxiously, Adel was still awaiting the news, and his heart was afraid for the women fighters who introduced their souls as redemption of their homeland. Also, Hamed, who optionally followed his heart beloved so that he never departed her to death, stayed with Adel submitting to the military commands.

Soon, the news spread about ISIS occupation of (Kobani) zone, and hundreds of fighters, men and women, were killed, but none of them fell as captives because they took vows to commit suicide with the last bullet they had, before falling captives to their enemy.

The news of the fighter, Brevan headed the radio and TV media, when she exploded herself lest fell captive!

The news bulletin also reported the death of "Shirin" and "Rohani" during performing their duty, but "Rayhaneh" continued to hide and kill a lot of The ISIS terrorists.

After ISIS could control many areas from (Kobani), she was caught by a criminal who beheaded her , and her blood spilt at the hands of life thieves.

Her pictures published in the media , the ISIS assassin was raising her slaughtered head, and her two blonde braids were descending to the ground, despite that, smile never parted her face, drawn on her features while she was going for martyrdom for the sake of her homeland... A smile of great love that broadened to include the whole world... or a light sneaking among the walls to penetrate the barriers, and reach to each inch these villains wreaked in them.

In the area where she was beheaded, a tree germinated with a red trunk, and her news generated as the wilderness had generated in the deserted hearts... the tree had many

shoots and branches, until in a short time, it became a big tree that its age seemed to be hundreds of years.

The ends of its branches were tapered like the nails, and too sharp so that any person could not enjoy its shadow but hardly, it would mash him with its claws at any wrong trial.

It was said that the tree enjoyed some people who sheltered under its shadow so that they could sleep safely under it. Whereas for others, its branches speared in the ground forming a net of branches like a prison, it also bloomed flowers which bled a red liquid.

Rumors circulated between real and fancy sayings. It became daily chat that the tree became an auger when it saw any terrorist from the ISIS coming toward it. It squeezed him to death... and it was said that it protected the lovers escaping from the eyes of onlookers.

A girl disclosed what she had seen at night:

" I saw a young lady coming out of that tree and heading towards me... yes, I saw that believe me.. she has wings hovering high flying over the tree like a beautiful bird, I saw her again while I was doing ablution: she came out of the tree and did ablution, and did not utter a word. She smiled and left in a glance of sight.

Once she wrote words on the tree: you will see me again, so don't be afraid. I'm the heart of all lovers, the heart of the front, the mothers and the heart of sweethearts.

Many things were said, but he did not pay any attention to the sayings, and the flute player remained playing, and playing different tunes according to what he had heard from the people.

It was also said that "Rayhaneh" was hovering around her tree, and the flute player was under the shadow of the tree which he used to meet "Shirin" under its shadows, playing a sad tune... a tune that no one understood but the one who was wallowing in fire flames.

Rumors pleased the people, expressing their own wishes to kill any number of the ISIS, every morning, they found tens of them dead under its branches with no signs of killing or smothering on any of them... ISIS called it "The auger tree".

In Iraq, Adel and other armed groups of the Kurds faced difficulties in using old weapons, and when they received a cargo of new weapons, they were unqualified to use them technologically needing more training.

Although there were old tensions between the Turkmen and the Kurds, they were fighting side by side to attack terrorism, and for the honor of the country and their own races.

One a windy day, weird sighs were heard coming from the tree, crying sobs were also heard, and sometimes pleasure guffaws, drums and tambourines beats. Nobody believed what were said, but nobody also denied what had been

heard because they saw "Rayhaneh's" smile and her slain head.

Nobody knew from the news about the fighters at the front rows.. no one knew who survived or died, because it was a collective death.

That time, the Peshmerga forces managed to liberate (Snoni) entity affiliated to Sinjar region, they achieved a progress in "Al Oainat" area, "Rabeea" entity west of Al Mosel. They also imposed their control on the Iraqi-Syrian frontier areas, and captured fifteen terrorists after collective fleeing of the ISIS members towards the Syrian borders during the battle erupted in the surrounding of Sinjar region, and the area was combed in cooperation with the international flight reaching Al Mosel Dam on the main highway of (Al Mosel – Dhouk)...

Nobody knew about the rest of the names from the men team as they were fighting to death, and they did not know before their death about the women fighters, or the women who exploded themselves, or were killed or slain... Everywhere there was a captive of death from its sides.

Chapter 8

**When revenge and assault rule the world,
They have to conclude in the memory
That death is the only ,
and the nearest to them
from the others.**

=====

Some Yezidis sheltered to "Shinkal" mountain with many of their comrades fearing of the assault of ISIS who conquered the area, and captured twenty families, and buried them alive. So they were terrified from their chasing. They were laughing and congratulating each other as if it were their great Feast.

They informed the Yezidi families which could not run away that they had a time limit of 24 hours to announce their Islam, if not, they would be slain.

They slaughtered many of them and took photos for them, and published them on the social websites. They announced their crimes, and non- humanity on public.

ISIS also gave the Kurdish families the same period to leave the city. They addressed them as traitors, and commanded them to leave their properties because they became their own, and their ISIS state!

They blew up many Yezidi shrines, and Lady Zainab shrine amidst the region. A lot of Yezidis remained besieged in the mountains of Sinjar without food, water and medicines.

"Jotiar" Saw all his family buried alive, He also saw the captives who were hit by the guns, killing of men, and capturing the captives, and selling the women in auctions.

He saw with his own bare eyes ISIS terrorists raping the Yezidi girls and women on public, in front of their parents and relatives, which was unacceptable by the human conscience.

These cases continued for many Yezidi family whose girls and women were raped on public after killing their parents and relatives, to an extent that there was one way so far that the parents would kill their daughters and wives lest they might have been raped by the bloody ISIS terrorists!

The human conscience should bear the results of this Genocide, and Humanitarian disaster committed against civilians, and armless people including women, the elderly and children.

They spread out in the open like birds deserting their nests, they saw the spikes descending from the sky, and

turned around them, they saw them at night hoping their descending from the sky never stopped , they implored to meet them, to prevail serenity of the spike on them, and their bodies relaxed from fatigue, and their hearts subsided from oppression. When their memories were about to depart, they derived hope, and memory from the sky raining spikes, thin spikes like a shining hair. They did not wanted their hopes to remain as a prey to forgetfulness, so they watch it raining.

To die of illness and coldness made other things unimportant, such as the hope of returning back to the stolen homeland!

Whenever they heard a move at night, they thought it was " the angle" beside the fearer and the unclad of poverty. Closer to the patient, the weeper and the lonely .

It might reach the heart of a mother of three children. She was outside her home, and she phoned her house when she knew about the savage attack!! After they had her father, and two brothers, the ISIS terrorist replied her from her house:

" Come to take the head of your husband!"

The angle stood beside the young lady every night but nobody could see her, and imagine the severed head, and the horror of the wife of hearing that. And the horror of children heard about severed heads thrown on the ground, among them "Rayhaneh's " head forever, with the severed and raising on the sub of the guns, and crushed

head with ground. The dust shared them with its fresh scent.

The angle hovered over the heads of Yezidi ladies fled with their children to the Turkish border on their feet under a temperature reaching 50 C, with little food that never subsided their hunger... but it helped easing their alienation, and the dreariness of the road.

They used to live in peace and safety before the attacks of ISIS to an extent that some of them had forgotten some of their children due to horror, especially those families with great number of children!... Some little children and the elderly died... they also forgot to bring their passports, or their documents with them because the attacks did not availed them the chance even to remember their names...

And when they reached the border, only those who had their passport were allowed to cross the border, the rest remained at the border, so their news were cut off about each other.

After unequal clashes in arms in " Kobani" between the ISIS terrorists and the Kurdish forces, the terrorists killed the Kurdish captives savagely after running out of their ammunition, they also distorted their corpses!

They took some captives of women's daughters and sons, and left the women weeping for them because they did not know their children, husbands, and fathers' destiny.... Young ladies were driven to the emir to enjoy himself with

them! And old ladies were left out in the open... nobody cared for ill ladies of them. They were told if any of the old ladies died, to tell them to bury her out in the open... They did so when an old lady called "Kadera" died. They threw her to the stray dogs and wolves to ravage her flesh!

The power of the ISIS system was great concerning developed tools and arms, and this was the reason of their sudden spread on the border, and inside the Iraqi and Syrian cities, in Iraq and (Kobani), they attacked scattered towns in Iraq... they captured "Al Ramadi" city, and "Glolaa" city.

The terrorist ISIS system developed groups of tactics comprising suicide attacks, mines and snipers. Its terrorists used the American weapons seized from the Iraqi army like armored cars, rockets and tanks, let alone supplied by Sunni Arab countries with money, weapons and volunteers because they were fighting their Shia Iranian opponents on the Iraqi soil.

"Sefan", one of the Yezidi young men, saw his own beloved driven handcuffed by a bearded dirty terrorist, whereas he was afraid about her from her own perfume scent, let alone touching her with his tender fingers... His praying for her did not protect her, nor did the churches' bells. So he lamented her the time of the sun rising, but there was no use.

In the critical moment, "Rayhaneh" implored to the sword edge to be merciful to "Sifan's" mistress, and "Sefan"

begged the tremble of death, and prayed for her, he also prayed for the like of her of girls, but his praying was blown away with the wind freeing from reaching to the sky, and the sky witnessed what had happened looking at them with half-eye!

The young lady looked at the sword edge, and implored to the ISIS terrorist not to rape her, so he gave her two choices slaying her or raping her! But she chose to be slain!

The souls disappeared among sand, and the wild mountains feet... and the close and distant voices were burned the moment of cutting the veins!

No dreams remained for childhood... "Sefan" was the child seeing the beheaded "Sefan"! with his head separated from his body.

He was screaming:

" This head is mine, this eye is mine, I'm the smart pupil who surprised his teachers when he was young. I used to go to school with her company... "Nawar" is my girlfriend, I like her long braids especially when she runs, her braids run with her, then they glide to her waist.

This slain guy is me, and that's my corpse on the sand, and the flies are licking its blood!"

Moments of panic and terror dominated "Sefan" as he saw an angle hovering around him. He murmured with weird

words, and moved circularly around himself. He looked at the flies and blood stuck on his corpse with a weird look, then he left the place. The angle and "Sefan", the young man, also left the place.

The time was dismal, and was its patience on the fires harvesting the bodies!

" You are dismal, O time, as you see properties stealing, houses demolishing over their tenants, and you're wicked, O time, as you're standing motionless and surprised! "

Time was foolish like its companions from the ISIS. The damned time heard the screaming of the little girl whose father was slain at dawn:

" This body laid out on the ground is my father"

She dismissed the flies off him hoping not to lick his body.

In "Spiker", the veils removed off the black faces, and it was clear the white from the gray. It was also clear the silence of the human conscience of the historical crime, and the world honor, and the silence of the voices claiming their rights.

But the souls did not keep silent, they wiped the foreheads dusted with blood and dust, and kissed these foreheads to reach peacefully and reassuringly to their Lord who was patient for the unjust of the human beings, or the delayer His divine punishment to unknown time.

"Shirin" admonished the bare sky as she saw four women corpses were thrown on the sides of the road between "Al Mosel" and "Tekrit". She collected some earth, and threw it on their genitals revealed to the insects and reptiles. Beside them, there were their children with their cheeks dimples free of smiles. The sunny faces, and the lunatic eyes rolled around until they became holes for dust.

"Warohani" sat at the end of the court hall which was established by ISIS to rule the Iraqis according to ablution and testification.

The story started when the army commander ordered to throw away the IDs to conceal their truth and their military numbers. He also order the soldiers to wear civil clothes not uniforms fearing to be captives for the terrorists.

It was present for the one who tried to be a Sunni or a Shea when he was under investigation because the Shea's destiny had the same destiny of his brothers to be shot out in the open or to be slain!

She could not stop her voice due to the horror of what she had seen after the court... shooting was intentional, and guided, and the fugitives' destinies were bullets, this if they were not victims of the telltales of "Tekrit" people of the tribes, and delivered them to the ISIS.

" Brevan" wished to grant them her last bullet which she hided for such an end to die honorably, But big treason

made them ransoms, and easy bites in the mouths of the disbelievers.

(1700)... how could "Brevan" count this big number ! The other number came forgiveness of " Abi Bakr Al Baghdadi" for them because they were Sunnis ! after he apologized from them and gave each one of them fifty thousand Dinars, they, in return, gave him the crossing code to their relatives if they were asked at check points, Which was " they are from the link of "Ali Soliman, Abo Nabil "

Fathers and mothers suffered the loss of their children, and the brides' loss of their marriage contracts. They demanded the central and local governments, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior to reveal the destinies of their children, and the husbands of the unknown future who were missed from "Spiker' Base".

The news of hundreds of the students of Air Forces in "Spiker's Base", north of "Tekrit" were executed, and their collective execution pictures were published under the command of " Al Baghdadi" to prove the local and international hatred and treasons. It was the last mask that revealed the face of ugliness and savagery.

The ISIS forces dominated "Tekrit" and " Al Dour" region without fight, but in " Al Doloeah" region the tribes could drive them out.

The sons of Iraq died without water and nourishment, out in the open under the hot of the sun. Their crowds were

waiting for bullets aimed at their heads from the back after their eyes blindfolded, and their hands were handcuffed to the back. They drove them to the area of " Saddam's Palaces".

"Mohammad" could not keep the ring of his engagement, one of the ISIS terrorists stole it before he inserted him in the crowd... "Mohammad's" dreams were big, and his hope was greater than his counted days.

They loved each other since they were young, and love accompanied them to its unexpected tragic end.

He secretly uttered the testification, and prayed to God to keep his fiancée, and might God give her a good husband who would deserve her great beauty and faith and her love to land, but the bullet scattered his brain on the ground after he had mentioned her name to the Lord, the mighty Keeper, the Irresistible... the invocation, the dream and his beloved image scattered on the ground.

"Rayhaneh" was busy packing her spikes with the others who were prepared for different killings.

She stood at the bank of the Tigris River holding every soldiers blindfolded, and handcuffed, when the hatred directed his bullet to his head, another malignant disbeliever threw him in the river.

The river was screaming with that suppressed scream, and the waves wept with the hovering of his spirit, and the hovering of the drawn body... "Rayhaneh" put a spike in

each soldier handcuff, easing his moment of suffocation of drowning, and collected what had remained of his brain after the bullet of a malignant sectarian lest the fish devoured it. She wrapped them in a bundle of her dress.

The river massacre was not only one crime , but two crimes... " killing and drowning" lest no spirits remained in their bodies, or survived.

The river cried with red tears, and the two reds mixed to cry and to call the name of Iraq, and in the name of the land, the homeland , the right and revenge.

The spikes on the banks formed beautiful faces of the victims, lighted faces that the masks could not see, nor did the masked persons of treason, the bastards and the plotter with them from "Tekrit" people, the transgressors of the tribes chiefs also did not feel them.

The angles heard the spikes scream, and the river scream. And they started to spread plain sheets of paper to write their names on them, in order to enter the Paradise.

They untied the umbilical cord which tied them to the earth, wrapping them with the swaddles of the heaven. It was not a scream, but spiritual songs that were receiving the new divine delegation of the armless soldiers' spirits, a scream of the man as a victim which none could tune them but the Lord Throne.

The river became the invocation of The Lord Kingdom, and "Rayhaneh" raised the amputated balms for invocation, she dictated basmallah of the honorable foreheads.

They gave their souls as the poor gave their last bites he had to a guest who knocked at the door. The guest was the dignity angle... and the adorer's song was to his fiancée. The song shook the ground of thrilling and revenge.

The Satanic deed in Spiker remained for their devils as a human stigma, and the soldiers' spirits ascending to be tuned by the Lord Thorne on the scream of the braid dance and the River.

"Rayhaneh" tore out her white scarf, and made of it white handkerchiefs. At dawn, she used to put a spike and a handkerchief at the door of each bride. Then she disappeared to attend the labor of a soldier's wife, and cut the baby's umbilical cord whose father never saw it yet.

The spirits of the victims were circling the platform of one of Saddam's palaces on the Tigris River, "Rayhaneh" also went round with them dancing martyrdom dance.

Screaming mixed with screaming : the River was screaming, the water was screaming, the land was screaming and crying. Only the hearts that executed the collective killing did not scream to young men at the age of flowers, all their guilt was that they dreamt with a more beautiful tomorrow and forming a family, and children

playing in the house court yard... their biggest guilt was their creed, the hatred of the conspirers and the ISIS.

Blind conscience: can't the Lord see it?

For the first time, "Rayhaneh" stood at the bank of the river which was screaming hysterically like this...All were screaming, and the honor was blind... the hearts were blind... but the spirits that perished came out of the river, and remained floating in the space waiting for a just trial, if ever there was a heavenly just, or just on earth.

Nothing remained but the flute, and "Hamed"... the flute was cawing the whoop of an ominous owl... its sound became husky, the huskiness was supposed to increase its beauty, tenderness and melody, but it was a broken strangled huskiness.

"Hamed" put his hand in the hand of "Rayhaneh", and made a circle with the spirits, and they started to go round dancing relentlessly, mad dancing... they were faint cooing.

The waves came out of the inner depth of the river. The fish also came out angrily with the floating corpses... but the consciences did not come out from their mute black depth!

What was "Rayhaneh" looking for here? And why did not "Hamed" play at Tigress River in the sad darkness?

Did sadness betrayed him? Or was it greater than him and his flute?

Whom did he and "Rayhaneh" come here to look for?

How many bundles of spikes were enough for all the victims from the first step of the ISIS on the Two Tributaries Land to the bitter moment?

Chapter 9

The price of the sacrifice is the hope warmth

=====

The wind was messing around with the snowflakes on the feet of the mountains and valleys. The sun was only memories passed amidst a crowd of black clouds, and dense rain... The soul of "Rayhaneh" challenged the toughness of the nature, and circled the places with its moaning looking for her beloved. The more the soul delved in conquering death and shelling, the more it realized that no use of searching.

However, she presented every martyr a spike, as if her strength delved into the death scent, and the scent of the final farewell of life in the eyes of the victims creating out of that a new challenge.

"Rayhaneh" saw her beloved alive because he was in Kurdistan of Iraq , and did not come with them to "Kobani". No news came to her about "Adel" and "Zayan", and the rest of the fighters. They also did not know anything about the ladies.

They swore between them to beget children after the war, and to name each child with a king of mountain flowers, not to remember the smell of gunpowder, and not to relate to their children about the tough past.

It was in a tranquil night when they, she and Adel, rested their bodies to a flourishing tree extracting the dream from its hiding place.

The toughness of coldness came suddenly as if all the winter collected in one night. The women fighters encouraged each other if some of them felt weakness:

" We should protect ourselves from capture, and from down pouring of bullets, we should fight to the last bullet."

Then one of them asked putting the machine gun beside her to tighten her loose waist belt:

" Is love still possible for us?"

" Where is the virgin song?"

" We are women with the shape of men... We are now Adam himself, and not who seduced him to eat the apple!"

In the midnight, the voices came in the shape of barking. Even the wind was barking, not only the expected wolves of the ISIS were barking, waiting for their attack at any moment.

The ISIS terrorists changed roles with the devils, and their human devils became serious and crucial !

"Shirin" asked her friend "Rohani" as she was putting her finger on the gun trigger:

" We killed a lot of them, so birds and worms will eat their corpses, but what about there, the other side of our lovers?"

"everything will be buried: the flute, the military boots, the military uniforms and the corpse!

The doors of life will be closed for them, but the paradise gates will be opened for them, the gates which were never opened but for the innocents and the martyrs" "Rohani" replied.

"Rayhaneh" extended her arms with all her might in the air, trying to discover something she did not see. She said:

" You're also corpses, just corpses remnants came out their coffins and tombs, you even do not have tombs nor tombstones with your names on them!"

"Rayhaneh" stopped suddenly addressing her comrades fighters, and listened profoundly to a flute sound coming from afar... She read between a husk and a husk the tunes of melodious revelation mixed with the oppression, departing and queries:

Listen carefully.. listen, don't you hear a flute sound? It's the player. What makes him come now, and on which hill does he stand to send us his tunes?"

"Shirin" got up trembling fearing the time that haunted her, or she was haunted by several times. She stood high-risen listening to her inner realms burdened with worries. Then she directed herself to several passageways to know where the sound came from, and her heart was trembling fearfully, adorably and infatuatedly.

The passageways were the same, and never changed. No entity confirmed the permission of passerby of playing shepherds, or the arrival of a strange comer but the fighters, and none of them played flute:

" Where did you hear that, "Rayhaneh" and "Shirin"? and why didn't I hear that?" "Rohani" said surprisingly.

" Shirin" walked like a cloud ready for precipitation. Then she stopped suddenly to listen to a flute haunted her soul, and she haunted it. So every time, it came in different sorrow, and it penetrated all her body even if it had come in fancy or came to her mind.

But "Rayhaneh" was waiting a different flute, not the flute of the fighter "Shirin", a flute whose colors and sounds were mixed, so it became mixed with tunes and blood, the gun powder smell and the color of the knife, the color of the sacred tree which grew in her blood spot, and the beautiful spikes and the doorsteps of the houses, the

dawn, and the boy: all of them came suddenly in the flute of "Rayhaneh" to become entirely different from her comrade fighters.

The revenge flute and a stab which no one felt but herself in its passing on her fair neck notching her steadfast flesh without screaming... a neck wiggling between his coarse hands and her voice holding the chords lest be weakened, and the ISIS terrorist gloated her.

Her flute toured with her braid around the river, and around every child who lost his parents and relatives, and emigrated aimlessly, she bought a kite for him, and made boats out of the sheets of the notebooks to run in the river water, flying over the ultraviolet rays, and covered with him his desire to have a mother who smelled his scent, so she would be the desire and the mother!

With her heart and soul, "Rayhaneh" groped the walls, knocking at the doors, collided with the pedestrians in the crowded streets, and on the peaks of the mountains, and on the rivers banks and valleys.

Whenever she collided with something, it was demolished and ruined.

What could be happened on the other side?"

She entered a door to ask about "Adel", but she stumbled with the doorstep... She pushed another door, she found an old man smoking cigarette butts... he did not heard her

movement, and he did not see her (he was blind and mute).

She pushed a door with no lock, and weird ghost passed beside her, but she did not see him a day of her life. When he saw her, he disappeared without introducing himself.

All the places were mute and hollow...Where should she look for "Adel"?

She decided to go back to the north of Iraq, but her comrade prevented her from going.

But she said to "Shirin":

" I'll find him... I'll find him even if the distance between me and him was an eon... we'll enter the moon house together.. Never be afraid, my friends. I'll find for you a place among stars, I'll never dispensed with you."

They all laughed:

" My lady, don't forget that we're souls.. why didn't Adel look for you?"

" Who knows , maybe he's touring the streets looking for me! Don't you expect so?"

He's a gentleman , so I'll knock at his house door, and I'll take the key which he used to put on the left of the door. I know where to find it! How many times we disputed about its place! And how much has he insisted on leaving it on the left of the door.

"Shirin" jumped in her place:

" Now, there's no door, no left, and no key! Everything burned with the shelling!

You mustn't try "Rayhaneh", I tell you for a thousand of times: " we're just souls"

With singing, we will lit the candles

Even if we were souls.

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" Then, we're souls?"

" Yes, and I'm a soul like you, so no graves for us. Nothing refers to our corpses. We were scattered in a second... we exploded ourselves, but "Rayhaneh's" corpse remained on the ground . It might be eaten by beasts, we don't know!"

"Rayhaneh" , Don't be afraid, we'll remain as long as the life remains in the universe, and the history will remember us. If it was a true history, it would never change our images, nor did it change our real aim: the martyrdom for the sake of our homeland.

The flute player is a soul, too. The child is two souls... all of us are souls.. we will be everywhere, but nowhere for us. We're touring all the streets, but no street shelters the remnants of our flesh... we follow even silence, wake it up to witness our own history, we are the truthful honest stage because we're truthful in everything, and nobody can falsify our witness in the name of the homeland.

We're the homeland for martyrdom, the female martyrdom for the sake of our land.

Don't you dance with me for the river when the corpses danced in "Spiker" and were hugged by the waves?

No dance resembles the dance of martyrdom... its tune cannot be played by any flute, but the flute of a fighter... do you remember "Kobani"?

We'll dance until the land is liberated from any impact of them, and we'll never stop till the last breath!"

" Shirin" laughed of "Rayhaneh's" speech especially her saying " We'll dance until the land liberated!" as if she really existed, and she would fight , and liberate the land:

" We're just souls, souls ,my friend, do not be taken by national enthusiasm, and fancy the reality."

" But I live in reality, I see it and expect it... Now in Sinjar, there are violent clashes between the Peshmerga and the ISIS terrorists. The Isis turned to fight randomly even if their system arrested 140 people of Al Mosel tenants . In return, 93 corpses of the ISIS terrorists were delivered to the ISIS forces.

These were killed during the liberation battles of "Tekrit" to the justice hospital in Al Mosel., two of them with the rank of Emir who were Iraqi nationals!!

But I was and I'm still with the souls of the slain in Al Mosel, at noon today, four necks were slain, and another four were shot with bullets.

I did not forget what they did with a Christian from Al Mosel in a collective circumcision for men. They were as sheep laid on the ground, what horrible violation of religious freedom and humanity.

I was distributing my spikes in the gardens, and wrapped them on the necks which were hanged on the tapered walls of the parks in Al Mosel to discerned from the eyes their questions, and their waiting of what to come, and at the hands of whom, and how it will be!

We're the expiation of this land and its tragedy, we're its plants, its aspect is from its mud, so we'll pay the price of this aspect, as we're its voice ready for life.

Everything is clear, my comrades... It's the sacred savagery. Without it, we'll find ourselves in the realm of " the ideal irony"

Let's dance now the braid dance and the river. My blond braid is higher than the barbarity of the ISIS, and closer to God, it's a holy guitar.

The sky rained luminous spikes , the banks and the palm trees danced. The Tigress water shook its waves holding the pure souls dance, and the smallest things seemed serene like the heart of a prophet.

The mud decorated by the tears of the mothers and wives became mirrors lighting the candles agitated due to the precipitation of the spikes which started to grew candles, so the light scattered on the banks, and the river was dancing.. dancing , and its dance remembered blood, necks and bodies... and it danced for the third time, and another wedding the pure souls to its heavenly purification.

The prickles forgot its admonition, and bloomed flowers, and the fathers under the bridge were reciting the prayer of light, candles and spikes.

It was the God who is one with his big universe, and all the things became from the south of Iraq to its south, a torch of singing, and the flute player revealed his secret, and the secret of his waiting for his beloved "Shirin" as she also unified and became a song. "Brehan", "Adel", "Rohani", "Kazin" and Zayan" were sorrows laid beside the river... the earth grew grass due to the prestige of the situation, and all the universe became a song!

The corpses came out of the river smiling so they confined them with the spikes, and perfumed them with the musk of the sacrifice.

The martyrs' souls blenched, and their names spread on each tongue, and mercy and justice left their blindness to sing for each martyr.

The treacherous souls and hearts were still pale
seeing their sins whirled around them handcuffed
by the sin chains.

The armless moon disappeared the moment they
drowned , and the illuminating moon attended to
raise the curtains, and from the balconies of the
palace, the guilty laughed like a child, and the
bullets rattled penetrating their chests like children
in a playing yard... their temples kissed the earth,
and swore allegiance to the homeland.

So life smiled in the eyes, and the eternity lighted,
and the river became a torch of light extending
from the earth to the sky.

They heard the murmur of the souls coming from
the sky, sprinkling pearls on the river banks, smiling
to the mothers' and fathers' eyes who lit the
candles under the bridge. The bridge would
become a shrine bearing the youth hopes...

"Rayhaneh" passed on the watching eyes, and the
flaming hearts under the yoke of silence and
tyranny, and I was promised with another life... and
a homeland without fever, illness or disease... and I
swore with promised pleasure:

" The homeland will march toward the sound of honor: the heaven preached the miracle, and Iraq will get up from its long slumber."

" Spiker" and its young men will utter the missing word which will not make the eyes captives of tears from now on!

The End



Yousef Ismail Shughri is a well-known Syrian poet, a journalist, an art critic and a translator. He studied The English language and the English literature at Damascus University, and graduated with a BA degree in 1983. As a feature writer, a columnist and an interviewer, he writes in English and Arabic in the Syrian and Arabic periodicals and dailies in the field of cultures.

He delivered and held a lot of lectures and arts courses and workshops in literature and plastic arts. He was honored many appreciation certificates and letters. He authored, translated and published a number of books including:

1. " Ash Amulet", poems in Arabic (KSA, 2012)
2. " The Horizon is blazing with Dawn under thy fingers", poems in Arabic, (Cairo, 2014)
3. "Light Sneaks", selected poems translated from Arabic into English, (KSA, 2014)

4. " The War Child's Diary", poems translated from Arabic into English, (USA, 2014)
5. "Morning Jasmines" Arabic poems, (unpublished)
6. " Heart in a palm" selected poems translated into English from different parts of the world. (unpublished)
7. "From the War Child's diary", A film scenario translated from Arabic . (unpublished)
8. " Hamout" , a novel translated from Arabic into English. (unpublished)
9. " Painting Experiences in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia", a critical studies, (unpublished)
10. "Plastic Arts Dictionary" translated and edited from English into Arabic, (unpublished)
11. " Thunderbolt Shadows", a novel translated from Arabic into English, (Unpublished)
12. " The Braid Dance and the River", a novel translated from Arabic into English, (unpublished)
13. Half century of Art (Lights on the glowing of Saudi Plastic arts), A Study translated from Arabic into English (unpublished)

