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| **Fadwa Tuqan (1917-2003)** |
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| This renowned Palestinian poet and activist was born to a rich and politically influential family in Nablus, a Palestinian city in the northern West Bank, where she attended primary school. After her family suspended her schooling at the age of 13, because of a jasmine flower given to her by an admiring boy, Tuqan resumed her education by taking private lessons at home. Interested in writing poetry, she was assisted by her brother Ibrahim Tuqan (1905-41), who had already become a well-known nationalist poet even outside Palestine. Fadwa Tuqan’sfirst poetry was published under the pseudonym of Dananir, but after the death of her father and Ibrahim, along with the establishment of Israel in 1948, she began to use her real name, as in her first volume of poetry *wahdi ma'a al-ayam* (*Alone with the Days*) in 1955. |
| This renowned Palestinian poet and activist was born to a rich and politically influential family in Nablus, a Palestinian city in the northern West Bank, where she attended primary school. After her family suspended her schooling at the age of 13, because of a jasmine flower given to her by an admiring boy, Tuqan resumed her education by taking private lessons at home. Interested in writing poetry, she was assisted by her brother Ibrahim Tuqan (1905-41), who had already become a well-known nationalist poet even outside Palestine. Fadwa Tuqan’sfirst poetry was published under the pseudonym of Dananir, but after the death of her father and Ibrahim, along with the establishment of Israel in 1948, she began to use her real name, as in her first volume of poetry *wahdi ma'a al-ayam* (*Alone with the Days*) in 1955. In this volume, she depicts personal experiences reflecting her suffering on personal and political levels. Romanticism and calls for social change and political protest emerged in subsequent volumes, such as Wajadtuha (*I found it*) in 1957, *A'tina Huban* (*Give us Love*) in 1960, and her 1969 *al-Layl wa-al-Fursan* (*The Night and the Horsemen*). The latter volume criticizes the Israeli occupation and expresses political resistance, feelings of loss, and maintaining resilient hope.  Tuqan also learned English and went to Oxford in 1963 to study English literature. This London experience, as she presented it positively in her autobiography, was unaffected by her country’s subjugation under British mandate. Tuqan continued to compose romantic and political poetry, and eventually became a pioneering literary figure renowned in the Arab canon, winning the Sultan Oweis Prize for Poetry in 1990. As a highly celebrated Arab poet, she moved between personal issues, such as a longing for love and freedom, and political concerns, specifically her commitment to the Palestinian cause against the Israeli occupation and policies. Tuqan’s autobiography, *Rihla Jabaliya* (translated into English in 1990 as *A Mountainous Journey:* *A Poet's Autobiography*), was first published in serialized portions in 1978 and 1979 in the journal *Al-Jadid.* The text appeared in a book that was reprinted three times by 1988. The text was equally acclaimed, and its introduction was written by the Palestinian poet Samih al-Qasim, who described her autobiography as unique in its honesty, originality, and eloquence, comparing it to the classical autobiography *Al-Ayyam* by Taha Hussein (1889-1973). Tuqan’s legacy is still highly celebrated in the Arab world as an example of a committed literary figure that stands for poetic creativity and national causes. |
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