

My Friend and the Word “Loathai”

I personally love to listen to the old music channel, especially Adeni music—a style of music from Yemen which was popular in Kuwait during the 1970’s—and the songs of Umm Kulthum. This is because the songs had beautiful meanings, many of which reflected old Arabic poetry. They combined music, literature, and beautiful voices to produce an artistic heritage that can never be repeated. One day I switched on the radio and listened to a song that brought me back to the sixties and it goes like:

Oh God, my God, I did not know that love would do this to me!

Though you may try to write about this love,

You cannot reach the heights of that loathai writer.

A thousand verses could he write about his love,

While Al Asmai himself composed no such verse.

These beautiful words caught my attention and urged me to search for the writer. Google, of course, facilitated the search process, and I found out that it was written by a Kuwaiti poet, the Late Abdullah Al Faraj. I don’t want to talk here about the poet or the song, but about this word *loathai*. It was the first time I ever heard the word, and again I used Google to search for its meaning. As it turns out, *loathai* means a “brilliant individual with great intelligence and attention.” Frankly, I was so happy to finally find a word that my reading and literature-loving friend, Muthanna Al Hamad, would find difficult to explain. The next time I met with my banking friends, I proudly asked him about the meaning of the word *loathai*. In seconds he answered in a way that stunned us all, as though he were reading it directly from the dictionary. I don’t share this incident for the purpose of praising