

Inheritance

Miranda Lao

劳敏芳



I press you to me. Come, pain, feed on me. Bury
your fangs in my flesh. Tear me asunder.
I sob, I sob.

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

**You don't start over. That's what it's about.
Every step you take is forever.
You can't make it go away. None of it.**
Cormac McCarthy, *No Country for Old Men*

Where life is precious, life is precious.
Ruth Wilson Gilmore

**The trees you planted in childhood have grown
too heavy. You cannot bring them along.
Give yourself to the air, to what you cannot hold.**
Rainer Maria Rilke tr. Anita Barrows & Joanna Macy,
"Part One, Sonnet IV" *Sonnets to Orpheus*

Podrán cortar todas las flores, pero no podrán
detener la primavera.

You can cut all the flowers, but you cannot stop
the spring.

Pablo Neruda

now what were motionless move(exists no
miracle mightier than this:to feel)
poor worlds must merely do, which then are done;
and whose last doing shall not quite undo
such first amazement as a leaf-here's one

more than each creature new(except your fear
to whom i give this little parasol,
so she may above people walk in the air
with almost breathing me)-look up:and we'll
(for what were less than dead)dance, i and you;
high(are become more than alive)above
anybody and fate and even Our
whisper it Selves but don't look down and to
-morrow and yesterday and everything except love.
e.e.cummings

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you
into your loneliest loneliness and say to you:
'THIS LIFE AS YOU NOW LIVE IT AND HAVE LIVED IT, YOU
WILL HAVE TO LIVE ONCE MORE AND INNUMERABLE
TIMES MORE; AND THERE WILL BE NOTHING NEW IN IT,
BUT EVERY PAIN AND EVERY JOY AND EVERY THOUGHT
AND SIGH AND EVERYTHING UNUTTERABLY SMALL OR
GREAT IN YOUR LIFE WILL HAVE TO RETURN TO YOU, ALL
IN THE SAME SUCCESSION AND SEQUENCE—EVEN THIS
SPIDER AND THIS MOONLIGHT BETWEEN THE TREES,
AND EVEN THIS MOMENT AND I MYSELF. THE ETERNAL
HOURGLASS OF EXISTENCE IS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND YOU WITH IT, A SPECK OF DUST!'

Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth
and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once
experienced a tremendous moment when you would have
answered him:

'YOU ARE A GOD AND NEVER HAVE I HEARD ANYTHING
MORE DIVINE.'

If this thought gained possession of you, it would change
you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each
and every thing, 'DO YOU DESIRE THIS ONCE MORE AND
INNUMERABLE TIMES MORE?' would lie upon your actions
as the greatest weight.

Fredrich Nietzsche tr. Walter Kaufman,
The Gay Science, Aphorism 341, "The Greatest Weight"

The first mathematics course I took as an undergraduate was Number Theory. Well, that's not true, I took others before it, but I for a number of reasons I consider it my first, not least of which is that it's where I fell in love with math.

Anyways, one of the first things taught to me in this class was that to write a proof, you start with axioms. These are your guiding lights. They are assumed; everything else is built on top of them.

One of the basic field axioms is that 0 is not equal to 1. This is an apparently obvious statement, but in mathematics it has important implications. If we drop this assumption—which we certainly can!—then 0 is equal to 1, and actually, everything is indistinguishable from everything else. Suddenly so many theorems become what mathematicians describe as *uninteresting*; it becomes trivial to pursue further lines of inquiry and understanding. So, in every field except the zero field, this axiom is assumed. The consequences of this assumption are everything that follows. In accepting that 0 is not 1, we receive infinity.

Outside the realm of mathematical abstraction, what this tells me is that we have to separate *somethingness* from *nothingness*: we choose to give ourselves, each other, and the world around us meaning. If we do this and take it seriously, everything has profound significance and weight.

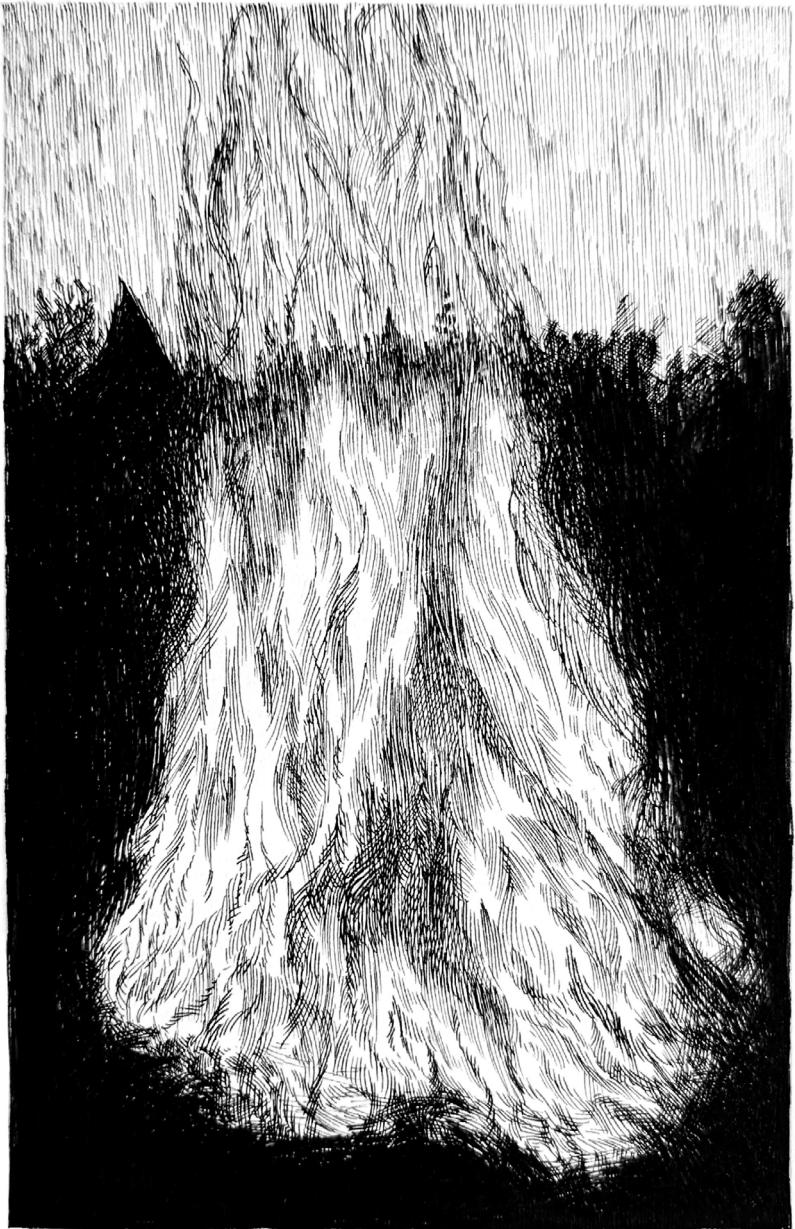
What does it mean to belong? We all come from someone something somewhere, and we'll return to someone something somewhere. Lately I've been thinking of this as *inheritance*. Inheritance is what is sustained. It ties our (people, life on earth, the earth itself—indeed, the stars) collective fate together.

Regarding the stars—it's become somewhat popular recently to conceive of ourselves as reconfigured stardust, cosmic debris rearranged over eons. Isn't that terrifying? We are inheritors of profound beauty; we are inheritors of unfathomable destruction. And not only do we all share the same cosmic inheritance, every action performed shapes the inheritance we leave for everything that comes after us. The greatest weight indeed! How are we to move, to live freely under it!

As much as we are fixed—fixed collections of stardust, fixed by the weight of what we inherit—we are also all vessels. We can give ourselves to each other, we all carry one another forward. Given more eons, the stars might say they were made of us.

When we talk about colonisation, we understand it to be *erasure*, processes by which myths of *tabula rasa*, *terra nullius*—blank slates, nobody's land—are perpetuated. It denies both colonizer and colonized a major part of their inheritance (a peoples' past and living connections; loved ones, lineages, objects of effort and care, residue, everything they've built into or returned to the earth): one side willingly so that they may indulge in the hubris of 'starting over, from scratch', of being 'self-made'; the other side under threats and promises of annihilation.

I am struck by extreme urgency to do my part in carrying forward the people of Palestine. They are people who have been torn from home, displaced, fleeing, living under apartheid regime for three-quarters of the last century. They have been forced to carry an unbearable amount alone, and yet in the face of this they hope, they dream, they love, they struggle, they live on. They will not be merely memories; they will inherit the earth.



School October 2023. Ink on Paper.
Inspired by the novel *School* by Isabel Pabán Freed

'We teach life, sir'

Rafeef Ziadah 2011

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre that had to fit into sound-bites and word limits.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre that had to fit into sound-bites and word limits filled enough with statistics to counter measured response.

And I perfected my English and I learned my UN resolutions. But still, he asked me, Ms. Ziadah, don't you think that everything would be resolved if you would just stop teaching so much hatred to your children?

Pause.

I look inside of me for strength to be patient but patience is not at the tip of my tongue as the bombs drop over Gaza.

Patience has just escaped me.

Pause. Smile.

We teach life, sir.

Rafeef, remember to smile.

Pause.

We teach life, sir.

We Palestinians teach life after they have occupied the last sky.

We teach life after they have built their settlements and apartheid walls, after the last skies.

We teach life, sir.

But today, my body was a TV'd massacre made to fit into sound-bites and word limits.

And just give us a story, a human story.

You see, this is not political.

We just want to tell people about you and your people so give us a human story.

Don't mention that word "apartheid" and "occupation".

This is not political.

You have to help me as a journalist to help you tell your story which is not a political story.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre.

How about you give us a story of a woman in Gaza who needs medication?

How about you?

Do you have enough bone-broken limbs to cover the sun?

Hand me over your dead and give me the list of their names in one thousand two hundred word limits.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre that had to fit into sound-bites and word limits and move those that are desensitized to terrorist blood.

But they felt sorry.

They felt sorry for the cattle over Gaza.

So, I give them UN resolutions and statistics and we condemn and we deplore and we reject.

And these are not two equal sides: occupier and occupied.
And a hundred dead, two hundred dead, and a thousand dead.
And between that, war crime and massacre, I vent out words and smile "not exotic", "not terrorist".

And I recount, I recount a hundred dead, a thousand dead.

Is anyone out there?

Will anyone listen?

I wish I could wail over their bodies.

I wish I could just run barefoot in every refugee camp and hold every child, cover their ears so they wouldn't have to hear the sound of bombing for the rest of their life the way I do.

Today, my body was a TV'd massacre

And let me just tell you, there's nothing your UN resolutions have ever done about this.

And no sound-bite, no sound-bite I come up with, no matter how good my English gets, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite, no sound-bite will bring them back to life.

No sound-bite will fix this.

We teach life, sir.

We teach life, sir.

We Palestinians wake up every morning to teach the rest of the world life, sir.

Spoken poetry performance by Rafeef Ziadah
12.11.2011 in London.
<https://youtu.be/aKucPh9xHtM>





Little Palestine: Diary of a Siege (2021). 1:13:38

English-translated subtitles

I dream of seeing my
mother and eating bread.

Like everyone!

I dream of all the detainees
being released.

I want to hear my
grandmother, to eat bread,
and for everybody to be
fine, may it please God.

I dream of breaking the
siege.

I dream of eating
shawarma and seeing
Hassan Hassan online
again.

I dream of my father
returning.





from opensubtitles.org.



I dream of eating a
chicken sandwich.
I dream of eating
shawarma.

I dream of eating
sugar.

I dream of my father
going back to how he
was.

I dream of the road
opening.

I dream of the camp
going back to how it
was.

You just spoke! You
said you dreamed of
sugar!

I also dream of the
road opening.

I dream of my brother coming back to life.
I do! I dream that my brother is alive again.
Because I miss him so much.

Little Palestine: Diary of a Siege (2021). 1:13:59



Details

Ghayath Almadhoun 2016 tr. Catherine Cobham

Do you know why people die when they are pierced by a bullet?
Because 70% of the human body is made up of water
Just as if you made a hole in a water tank.

Was it a random clash dancing at the head of the alley when I passed
Or was there a sniper watching me and counting my final steps?

Was it a stray bullet
Or was I a stray man even though I'm a third of a century old?

Is it friendly fire?
How can it be
When I've never made friends with fire in my life?

Do you think I got in the way of the bullet
Or it got in my way?
So how am I supposed to know when it's passing and which way it will go?

Is an encounter with a bullet considered a crash in the conventional sense
Like what happens between two cars?
Will my body and my hard bones smash its ribs too
And cause its death?
Or will it survive?

Did it try to avoid me?
Was my body soft?
And did this little thing as small as a mulberry feel female in my maleness?

The sniper aimed at me without bothering to find out that I'm allergic to
snipers' bullets
And it's an allergy of a most serious kind, and can be fatal.

The sniper didn't ask my permission before he fired, an obvious example of
the lack of civility that has become all too common these days.

I was exploring the difference between revolution and war when a bullet
passed through my body, and extinguished a torch lit by a primary school
teacher from Syria acting in cooperation with a Palestinian refugee who
had paid with his land to solve anti-Semitism in Europe and been forced to
emigrate to a place where he met a woman who was like memories.

It was a wonderful feeling, like eating an ice cream in winter, or having
unprotected sex with a woman you don't know in a city you don't know
under the influence of cocaine, or...

A passerby tells me half of what he wants to tell me so I believe him then
we stab each other like two lovers, a woman beckons to me to follow her so
I do and we have a child who looks like betrayal, a sniper kills me so I die,
the sky falls on the passersby so the tourists flee, the sky falls on the passersby
and my heart doesn't flee, the sky falls upwards so a poet commits collective
suicide in his room even though he was alone that evening.

That evening oblivion attacked me unawares, so I bought the memory of a soldier
who hadn't returned from war, and when I noticed the flaw in the time, I couldn't
find a place of exile appropriate to my wound so I decided not to die again.

The city is older than the memories, the curse is fenced in by melancholy, time
is late for its appointments, walls enclose time with monotony, death looks
like my face, the poet leans on a woman in his poem, the general marries
my wife, the city vomits its history and I swallow the streets and the crowd
swallows me, I, who distribute my blood to strangers, and share a bottle of
wine with my solitude, beg you, send my body by express mail, distribute my
fingers equally between my friends.

This city is bigger than a poet's heart and smaller than his poem, but it is big
enough for the dead to commit suicide without troubling anyone, for traffic
lights to bloom in the suburbs, for a policeman to become part of the solution
and the streets a mere background to truth.

That evening, when my heart stumbled, a woman from Damascus took hold of me and taught me the alphabet of her desire, I was lost between God whom the shaykh planted in my heart and God whom I touched in her bed, that evening,
my mother was the only one who knew I would never return,
my mother was the only one who knew,
my mother was the only,
my mother.

I sold my white days on the black market, and bought a house overlooking the war, and the view was so wonderful that I could not resist its temptation, so my poem deviated from the shaykh's teachings, and my friends accused me of cutting myself off, I put kohl' on my eyes and became more Arab, and drank camel's milk in a dream and woke up as a poet, I was watching the war like lepers watch people's eyes, and had arrived at frightening truths about poetry and the white man, about the season of migration to Europe, and about cities that receive tourists in peacetime and mujahidin in wartime, about women who suffer too much in peacetime, and become fuel for the war in wartime.

In a reconstructed city like Berlin lies a secret that everyone knows, which is that the...
No, I will not repeat what is known, but I will tell you something you don't know: the problem with war is not those who die, but those who remain alive after the war.

It was the most beautiful war I've been in in my life, full of metaphors and poetic images, I remember how I used to sweat adrenalin and piss black smoke, how I used to eat my flesh and drink screams, death with his scrawny body leaned on the destruction committed by his poem, and wiped his knife clean of my salt, and the city rubbed my shoes with her evening and the street smiled and the city counted the fingers of my sorrow and dropped them on the road leading to her, death weeps and the city remembers the features of her killer and sends me a stabbing by post, threatening me with happiness, and hangs my heart out on her washing line strung between two memories, and oblivion pulls me towards myself, deeply towards myself, deeply, so my language falls on morning, and balconies fall on songs, headscarves on kisses, back streets on women's bodies, the details of alleyways on history, the city falls on the cemeteries, dreams fall on the prisons, the poor on joy, and I fall on memory.

When I became a member of the Union of the Dead, my dreams improved and I began to practice yawning freely, and despite the drums of war singing close to my bloated body I had plenty of time to befriend a stray dog, who chose not to eat from my corpse despite his hunger, and was content to sleep by my feet.

A number of people tried to pull me out of the way, but the sniper argued with his gun so they changed their minds, he was an honorable sniper, worked honestly, and didn't waste time or people.

That little hole,
Remaining after the bullet had passed through,
Emptied me of my contents,
Everything flowed out gently,
Memories,
Names of friends,
Vitamin C,
Wedding songs,
The Arabic dictionary,
The temperature of 37 degrees,
Uric acid,
The poems of Abu Nuwas,
And my blood.

The moment the soul begins to escape through the little gate the bullet has opened, things become clearer, the theory of relativity turns into something self-evident, mathematical equations that used to be vague become a simple matter, the names of classmates we've forgotten come back to us, life is suddenly illuminated in perfect detail, the childhood bedroom, mother's milk, the first trembling orgasm, the streets of the camp, the portrait of Yasser Arafat, the smell of coffee with cardamom inside the house, the sound of the morning call to prayer, Maradona in Mexico in 1986, and you.

Just as if you are eating your beloved's fingers, or suckling from an electric cable, or being inoculated against shrapnel, just as if you are a memory thief, come, let's give up poetry, exchange the songs of summer for gauze dressings and harvest poems for surgical thread, leave your kitchen and the children's bedroom and follow me so that we can drink tea behind the sandbags, the massacre has room for everyone, put your dreams in the shed and give the plants on the balcony plenty of water, for the discussion with iron may go on for a while, leave behind Rumi, Averroes and Hegel, and bring along Machiavelli and Huntington and Fukuyama, for we need them now, leave behind your laughter, your blue shirt and warm bed, and bring your teeth and nails and hunting knife, and come.

Throw away the Arab Renaissance and bring on the inquisition,
Throw away European civilization and bring on the Kristallnacht,
Throw away socialism and bring on Joseph Stalin,
Throw away Rimbaud's poems and bring on the slave trade,
Throw away Michel Foucault and bring on the AIDS virus,
Throw away Heidegger's philosophy and bring on the purity of the Aryan race,
Throw away Hemingway's sun that also rises and bring on the bullet in the head,
Throw away Van Gogh's starry sky and bring on the severed ear,
Throw away Picasso's Guernica and bring on the real Guernica with its smell of fresh blood,
We need these things now, we need them to begin the celebration.

Like the Letter "N" in the Qur'an

Mahmoud Darwish 1995
tr. Amira El-Zein

East of the springs, in a forest of olives,
my grandfather embraced his forsaken shadow.
No mythical grass sprouted on his shadow,
no lilac cloud rained upon that land.

In his shattered dream, the earth is a robe
woven by the sumac needle.
My grandfather awakened to gather herbs from his vineyard
that was buried under the black road.

He taught me the Qur'an in the basil garden
east of the well:
We descended from Adam and Eve
who were in the paradise of oblivion.
O grandfather, I am the last of the living in this desert, so let us return.

No one guards my grandfather's name
bordered by a sea and a desert,
and both deny my grandfather and his sons
hovering now around the letter "N".
In *surat al-Rahman* of the Qur'an,
O God, be my witness!

As he was born of himself
and buried within himself close to hell,
let him bestow upon the phoenix
a little of his secret's fire
so she may kindle the lights
in the temple after him.

East of the springs, in a forest of olives,
my grandfather embraced his forsaken shadow.
No sun rises on his shadow, no shadow sets upon him.
My grandfather is forever beyond.

I Belong There

Mahmoud Darwish 1986
tr. Munir Akash & Carolyn Forché

I belong there. I have many memories. I was born as everyone is born.
I have a mother, a house with many windows, brothers, friends, and a prison cell
with a chilly window! I have a wave snatched by seagulls, a panorama of my own.
I have a saturated meadow. In the deep horizon of my word, I have a moon,
a bird's sustenance, and an immortal olive tree.

I have lived on the land long before swords turned man into prey.

I belong there. When heaven mourns for her mother, I return heaven to
her mother.

And I cry so that a returning cloud might carry my tears.

To break the rules, I have learned all the words needed for a trial by blood.

I have learned and dismantled all the words in order to draw from them a
single word: *Home*.

The Word

Pablo Neruda 1962
tr. Alastair Reid

The word
was born in the blood,
grew in the dark body, beating,
and flew through the lips and the mouth.

Farther away and nearer
still, still it came
from dead fathers and from wandering races,
from lands that had returned to stone
weary of their poor tribes,
because when pain took to the roads
the settlements set out and arrived
and new lands and water reunited
to sow their word anew.

And so, this is the inheritance —
this is the wavelength which connects us
with the dead man and the dawn
of new beings not yet come to light.

Still the atmosphere quivers
with the initial word
dressed up
in terror and sighing.
It emerged
from the darkness
and until now there is no thunder
that rumbles yet with all the iron
of that word,
the first
word uttered —
perhaps it was only a ripple, a drop,
and yet its great cataract falls and falls.

Later on, the word fills with meaning.
It remained gravid and it filled up with lives.
Everything had to do with births and sounds —
affirmation, clarity, strength,
negation, destruction, death —
the verb took over all the power
and blended existence with essence
in the electricity of its beauty.

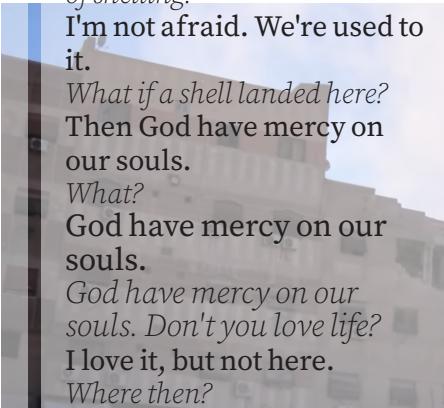
Human word, syllable, combination
of spread light and the fine art of the silversmith,
hereditary goblet which gathers
the communications of the blood —
here is where silence was gathered up
in the completeness of the human word
and, for human beings, not to speak is to die —
language extends even the hair,
the mouth speaks without the lips moving —
all of a sudden the eyes are words.

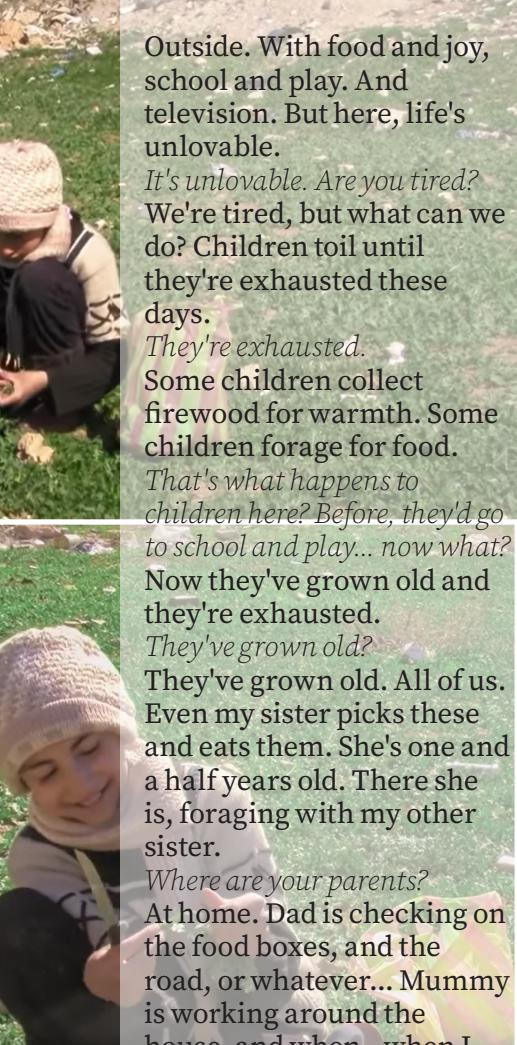
I take the word and go over it
as though it were nothing more than a human
shape,
its arrangements awe me and I find my way
through each variation in the spoken word —
I utter and I am and without speaking I approach
the limit of words and the silence.

I drink to the word, raising
a word or a shining cup,
in it I drink
the pure wine of language
or inexhaustible water,
maternal source of words,
and cup and water and wine
give rise to my song
because the verb is the source
and vivid life — it is blood,
blood which expresses its substance
and so implies its own unwinding —
words give glass-quality to glass, blood to blood,
and life to life itself.

What are you doing?
Foraging for some verbena.
Foraging for what?
Verbena.
Why? Is it edible?
We didn't use to eat it, but
now because of the hunger,
we do.
Do you eat it every day?
We don't have anything else.
Huh?
We do eat it everyday, we
can't find anything else.
Sometimes we just boil
water and...
Water and what?
And spices.
Where are you from?
Al-Hajirah.
What grade are you in?
Fourth grade.
Are you going to school?
No.
Why not?
We could, but they won't let
us because we're displaced.
Who? Did you try registering?
Try, they'll let you. I know a
school that will admit you. Do
you want to register?
I've already missed half of
it.
It's not worth it?
Not this year.
..
Can you eat it raw?
Well, you cook it.
But you're eating it raw.
Let me have some.
You can make salads and
soups with it, it's tasty.
They say it's poisonous.


Only the big blooming ones.
This one has no flowers.
*The blooming ones are
poisonous?*
Yes. They sell big ones at the
market but these ones are
small.
*These are good? What's your
name?*
Tasnim.
*What did you use to dream
about, Tasnim?*
I never dreamed of
anything.
Nothing?
Food, that's all.
*And now what do you dream
about?*
Just food.
What do you feel like?
Everything. Fries, pizza,
chicken, halva, jam, bread...
bread is what I miss the
most.
You miss bread?
It's ok. God will compensate
us one day.
..
*Aren't you afraid of the sound
of shelling?*
I'm not afraid. We're used to
it.
What if a shell landed here?
Then God have mercy on
our souls.
What?
God have mercy on our
souls.
*God have mercy on our
souls. Don't you love life?*
I love it, but not here.
Where then?





Outside. With food and joy,
school and play. And
television. But here, life's
unlovable.

It's unlovable. Are you tired?
We're tired, but what can we
do? Children toil until
they're exhausted these
days.

They're exhausted.

Some children collect
firewood for warmth. Some
children forage for food.

*That's what happens to
children here? Before, they'd go
to school and play... now what?
Now they've grown old and
they're exhausted.*

They've grown old?

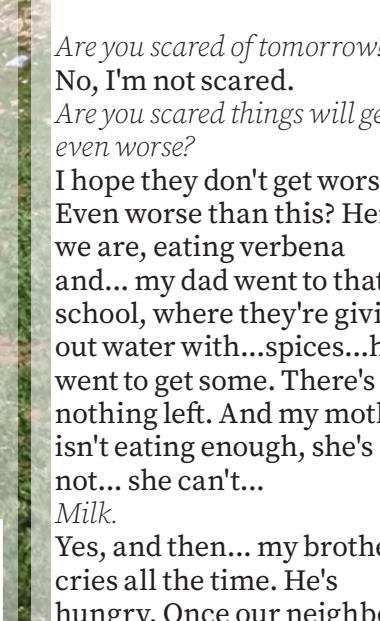
They've grown old. All of us.
Even my sister picks these
and eats them. She's one and
a half years old. There she
is, foraging with my other
sister.

*Where are your parents?
At home. Dad is checking on
the food boxes, and the
road, or whatever... Mummy
is working around the
house, and when...when I*

bring these, she'll cook
them for us. Sometimes she
forages with us. But I have a
little brother. He stays at
home. He's 6 months old.
He cries when he's left
alone.

..
*Tasnim, are you scared of
tomorrow?*

Huh?



Are you scared of tomorrow?

No, I'm not scared.

Are you scared things will get
even worse?

I hope they don't get worse.
Even worse than this? Here
we are, eating verbena
and... my dad went to that
school, where they're giving
out water with...spices...he
went to get some. There's
nothing left. And my mother
isn't eating enough, she's
not... she can't...

Milk.

Yes, and then... my brother
cries all the time. He's
hungry. Once our neighbors
received an aid basket, and
because it has milk, they
gave it to us. Because every
day and night, he wants
milk.

*[a nearby building is hit; an
explosion occurs.]*

There's shrapnel falling here.

Were you frightened?

No. Nothing to be afraid of.
I was scared.

My heart skipped a beat.

*So you were scared. Look, it hit
right next to us.*

This building? We didn't
even notice it!

*Little Palestine: Diary of a
Siege (2021). 1:15:19 - 1:22:25.
English-translated subtitles
from opensubtitles.org.*

Witchgrass

Louise Glück 1992

Something
comes into the world unwelcome
calling disorder, disorder —

If you hate me so much
don't bother to give me
a name: do you need
one more slur
in your language, another
way to blame
one tribe for everything —

as we both know,
if you worship
one god, you only need
one enemy —

I'm not the enemy.
Only a ruse to ignore
what you see happening
right here in this bed,
a little paradigm
of failure. One of your precious flowers
dies here almost every day
and you can't rest until
you attack the cause, meaning
whatever is left, whatever
happens to be sturdier
than your personal passion —

It was not meant
to last forever in the real world.
But why admit that, when you can go on
doing what you always do,
mourning and laying blame,
always the two together.

I don't need your praise
to survive. I was here first,
before you were here, before
you ever planted a garden.
And I'll be here when only the sun and moon
are left, and the sea, and the wide field.

I will constitute the field.

This Passover, who reclines?
Only the dead, their cupped hands filling slowly
with the red wine of war. We are not free.

The blood on the doorposts does not protect anyone.
They say that other country over there
dim blue in the twilight
farther than the orange stars exploding over our roofs
is called peace.

The bread of affliction snaps in our hands like bones,
is dust in our mouths. This bitterness brings tears to our
eyes.

The figs and apples are sour. We have many more
than four questions. We dip and dip,
salt stinging our fingers.

Unbearable griefs braided into a rope so tight
we can hardly breathe,
Whether we bless or curse,
this is captivity.

We would cross the water if we knew how.
Everyone blames everyone else for barring the way.

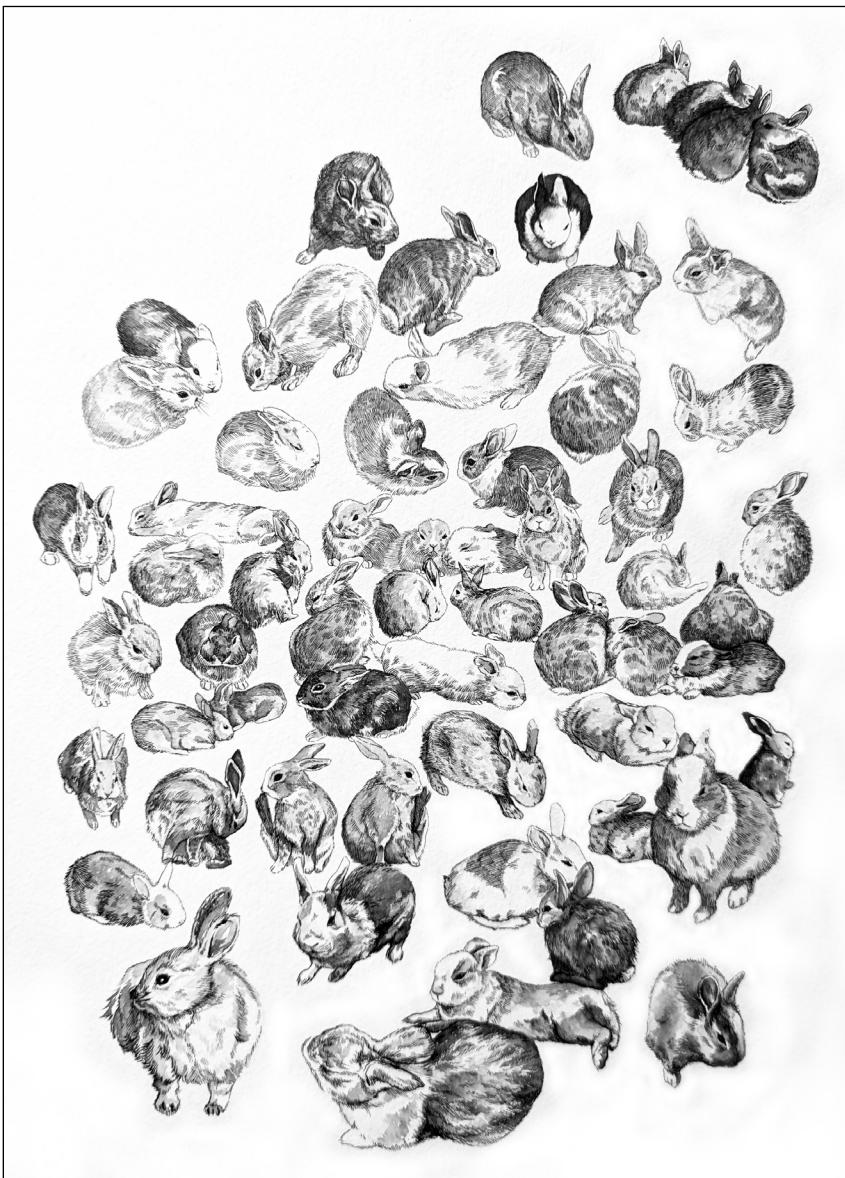
Listen, they say there is honey swelling in golden combs,
over there,
dates as sweet and brown as lovers' cheekbones,
bread as fragrant as rest,
but the turbulent water will not part for us.
We've lost the trick of it.

Back then, one man's faith opened the way.
He stepped in, we were released, our enemies drowned.

This time we're tied at the ankles.
We cannot cross until we carry each other,
all of us refugees, all of us prophets.
No more taking turns on history's wheel,
trying to collect old debts no one can pay.
The sea will not open that way.

This time that country
is what we promise each other,
our rage pressed cheek to cheek
until tears flood the space between,
until there are no enemies left,
because this time no one will be left to drown
and all of us must be chosen.
This time it's all of us or none.

Aurora Levins Morales 2002 Red Sea



Year of the Rabbit January 2023.
Ink and Watercolor on Paper.

A COUPLE NOTES:

I've shamelessly appropriated a great deal of words and poetry from a number of poets, writers, and artists. I hope you look for their work directly, in their original contexts. I've tried to make them easy to find.

Unless otherwise noted, the illustrations are mine.

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The front cover is a drawing from one of my sketchbooks, drawn in the summer of 2020. I had recently been sent home due to the coronavirus lockdown, so I was spending a lot of time with my parents, my brother, and my dog, Sabo. It's a drawing copy of one of my favorite photos. To me, it means easy overwhelming love.

The back cover is a recent drawing, done between the end of September and start of October 2023. It's an image I've been itching to record since I left home to come back to school. When I decided to come back to school, I felt I was making a big mistake, leaving my dog behind. I wrote this upon deciding to come to school: "I think of Miranda and Sabo as one thing, together, one does not make sense without the other." When it comes to inheritance, what has been given to me, what I can give, I owe a great deal of what I've learned about love to Sabo.

On the subject of what I've learned about love and inheritance, my family makes me and everything I do possible. This zine isn't dedicated to them, but I am.

The zine is dedicated to the people of Palestine. This zine is also an ongoing promise to myself, that I do my part in carrying them forward to collective liberation. As Aurora Levins Morales writes, this time it's all of us or none. If one of us matters, then all of us matters. Those who bear the brunt of our burden must be at the forefront of what I do.

