

Prayer for Gaza

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Jaddati rests her eyes
to reach
for the memory
of an orange,
of water
she does not have to strain
through the muslin patch
of her tired skirt

Babbeh
cannot close her eyes
she mistakes bombs
for fireflies
hears Jaddati
talk in her sleep
words gliding on stars

Days were not always solemn
nights did not entertain demons
forbidden love dipped fingertips
into Nahr al Muqatta'
giggles of childhood alliances
stirred circles in the water
worn as rings
bonds of loyal friendship
that would never fail them

in the distance
a child's lips crack
into fault lines
tasting
the end of the world
forced to drink from
sour foreign boots

Babbeh's Miriam
one day strolled
towards a lemonade
giggles flooding her
thoughts:
verses to Yasser's chestnut eyes

gift from Jaddati's tree

Shattered glass
exploding flesh
jumbled Miriam's steps
forever
her body a knot
her mouth a sudden stone

On hearing the news
Yasser swallowed his rifle
turning himself
into a pasture of sky
for Miriam's soul to wander,
to dance.

Her prayers
drop
like
rose
petals
over the Gaza strip;

his love
catches them
placing each
tenderly
in empty footprints
where laughter
has ceased
forever
where the ghosts
of Jaddati and Babbeh
haunt the landscapes of lost beauty
praying for childhood alliances
for fragrant succulent oranges
as the voices of G_d, of Allah, undulate
within clean, immortal waters.
Drink from one cup.
Live on one land,
where Love is the only name.

