

# THE DREAMS JOURNAL

A collection of writings on the  
theme of 'Dreams' by survivors

## LAMP LIFEBOAT LADDER

A public-private partnership  
for resettlement of survivors  
of torture and sexual violence



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# FOREWORD

by Catherine Filloux

I first met Jayne E. Fleming when she attended a production of my play **The Beauty Inside** in Philadelphia in 2005. We subsequently worked and traveled together to Guatemala and Haiti, which inspired my play **Luz**, produced in New York City. In 2022 I met Jayne in Philadelphia, again, where she was meeting with a client, and she told me about her resettlement program for survivors, Lamp Lifeboat Ladder. Jayne and Christopher K. Walters from Reed Smith shared with me Lamp Lifeboat Ladder's idea of a Writing Group. I listened to the Lamp Lifeboat Ladder team's needs and designed a structure for and organized the details of the Writing Group; Sophie McCann the Director of Creativity and Communication was a key contributor to the creation of the journal. I was fortunate to travel to Lamp Lifeboat Ladder's office in Athens, Greece where I was deeply inspired as I worked with a community of writers in person and, also, online. These 27 writers collectively created The Dreams Journal as the first initiative of Lamp Lifeboat Ladder's ongoing Writing Group. The writers published here are from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Congo, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Togo, and are currently located in Canada, France, Greece, Jordan, and the U.S.

To the original texts, I adjusted only spelling and made minimal changes in syntax for basic comprehension and clarity. I translated/refined French to English and English to French. Arabic, Farsi, and Lingala were translated by Lamp Lifeboat Ladder's team of translators: Parastou Hassouri, Charlene Mbombi, Diana Rabie, and Mahdis Sadeghipouya.

**Catherine Filloux** is an award-winning, French American playwright who has been writing about human rights and social justice for over 30 years. Filloux is the librettist for four produced operas, an activist, and the co-founder of Theatre Without Borders.

**“I WAS DEEPLY INSPIRED AS I WORKED WITH A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS IN PERSON AND, ALSO, ONLINE.”**

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Cover by Al-Amin Albadra, a survivor in Lamp Lifeboat Ladder's program.

# INTRODUCTION

## Lamp Lifeboat Ladder

Lamp Lifeboat Ladder is a global refugee resettlement program that supports survivors of torture, sexual violence, and trauma who have been forced to flee their homeland. We provide protection and holistic accompaniment to survivors, and work with them to identify and address their needs - this may be medical care, safe housing, access to education, or therapeutic support. We accompany survivors from the point of flight to the point of safety and self-reliance in a safe country.

Our team of lawyers, doctors, psychologists, advocates, case managers and other experts support survivors in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

Language is powerful and words are important. Some writers represented in this journal have told us that they feel diminished, shamed and objectified by the label 'refugee'. By contrast, they say, the term 'survivor' symbolizes power, agency and courage. We recognize that each individual in our program, and in the world, chooses his or her own identity. There isn't a catch-all word for everyone, except perhaps 'humanity'. In our program, we have adopted the word 'survivor' to honor and respect those who are leading us in our work.

Our program is shaped and led by survivors themselves. The name 'Lamp Lifeboat Ladder' comes from a Rumi poem: **'Be a lamp, or a lifeboat, or a ladder. Help someone's soul heal.'** The name is important as it was chosen by survivors in our program.

Our program began in 2002 and is a pro bono program of the international law firm, Reed Smith. Over the last two decades, we have represented and supported hundreds of survivors seeking resettlement in safe countries. More recently, through an agreement with the Canadian government, Lamp Lifeboat Ladder began providing a new pathway for 90 survivors and their families to resettle in Canada. During this time, we have been learning from survivors about how to build our survivor-led and survivor-guided approach.

Lamp Lifeboat Ladder is privately funded, which also makes it different from other resettlement programs. We raise money from private donors, funds and other individuals who want to support survivors in their resettlement journey and in rebuilding their lives.

**“BE A LAMP, OR A LIFEBOAT, OR A LADDER. HELP SOMEONE’S SOUL HEAL.”**

### **The Writers**

In June 2022 Lamp Lifeboat Ladder started a writing group for survivors in the program. The aim was to provide a dedicated space for survivors to learn new, or enhance their existing, writing skills and creative talents, as well as providing an alternative to the norm of survivors usually only being identified by their trauma and legal status.

Twenty-seven survivors in the program expressed an interest in participating in the writing group and their first theme was to write about 'Dreams'. Prestigious playwright Catherine Filloux began the first writing workshops with survivors in Canada, France, Greece, Jordan, and the U.S. and survivors produced the pieces of writing published in this journal.

We will continue to hold monthly writing workshops facilitated by Catherine Filloux and other guest writers who will support and champion the creative talents of survivors.

For more information, please visit: [www.lamplifeboatladder.org](http://www.lamplifeboatladder.org)

**“TWENTY-SEVEN SURVIVORS IN THE PROGRAM EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE WRITING GROUP AND THEIR FIRST THEME WAS TO WRITE ABOUT ‘DREAMS’.”**

# DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES, HOPE REMAINS STRONG

by Ahmad Hussein Dakmak Translated from Arabic by Diana Rabie

You know that we do not grieve over the people; we rather grieve the long conversations, the hopes... we grieve the years that pass and things that do not return to the way they once were. We grieve the big parts that have been cut off from our hearts... and our souls... and our thoughts... We mourn the coming days that we have no plans to deal with.

We always fear what will happen in the future. We fear what we will face in the hard times, or wait for it to happen... what I know well is that these are the days that one does not know where to go and with whom to go.

The days when one is entirely alone, acceptant, and living with their destiny, but with faint sadness, they would still wish if they only had one destination to go to or even one person to run to. I know that it is a feeling that makes a person feel as if they are living on the edge of the road, as if that fear is a constant reminder for when they wake up from sleep, when they eat and when they do anything that pleases them.

That feeling erodes the parts of one's memory. I want to say, and despite all that feeling, there is a light in that darkness, a light with a shining beam that says there is a door that will open because there is hope. Despite all that fear, there is reassurance that what we are waiting for will happen, and if it does not happen, God will compensate us with something better than it.

احمد حسين دقماق

أنت تعلم أننا لا نحزن على الأشخاص.. لكننا نحزن على الأوقات الطويلة من الأحاديث.. من الآمال.. نحزن على الأعمار التي تمضي.. ولا تعود الأشياء كما كانت.. على الأجزاء الكبيرة المقتطعة من قلوبنا.. وأرواحنا.. وتفكيرنا.. نحزن على الأيام القادمة التي لا نملك خططا للتعامل معها.

نحن دائماً نخاف ما الذي سيحدث في المستقبل نخاف ما الذي سيوجهنا من صعوبات او ننتظر هل سيحدث ما أعرف جيداً هذه الأيام التي لا يعرف فيها المرء إلى أين يذهب ومع من يمضي..

الأيام التي يكون فيها المرء وحيداً تماماً وراضياً ومُتعايشاً مع قدره لكنَّهُ يظَلُّ يتمنَّى بحُزْنٍ خَافِتٍ لو أنَّ لي وجهة واحدة أمضي إليها ولو شخصاً واحداً أرْكُضُ نَحْوَهُ. اعلم انه شعوراً يجعل الانسان وكأنه يعيش على هاوية الطريق وكأن ذلك الخوف يذكره عند استيقاظه من نومه وعند تناوله لطعامه وعند اي عمل يجعله سعيداً ولو للحظات.

ذلك الشعور الذي يتآكل في اجزاء ذاكرته. اريد ان اقول رغم كل ذلك الشعور يوجد هنالك نور في ذلك الظلام نوراً دأ شعاع وهاجاً يقول ان هنالك باباً سوف يفتح لان الأمل موجود رغم كل ذلك الخوف يوجد طمأنينة بأن ما ننتظره سيحدث ولو لم يحدث سيعوضنا الله خيراً منه.

# A DREAM

by Al-Amin Albadra Translated from Arabic by Diana Rabie

The dream took place in the garden of the Jesuit Center, which I find to be beautiful because of how different and special it is, with its rare trees and flowers that were scattered everywhere in an organized and an unorganized way. At times it had lilies, roses, iris, black iris, red iris, anemones, and many beautiful trees, including a lemon tree that bears new fruits each month. My favorite tree was a rare tree that does not exist in Jordan except in this place. I do not know who planted it. The tree is huge and tall, with a large, full stem resembling a shark's back fin. The tree was similar to the trees of the enchanted forests. It is silver on one side and black on the other. I wanted to send it to Baghdad because of its ability to resist the dry climate and the lack of water. I was hoping to send its seeds to Baghdad, but unfortunately, the Egyptian gardener kindly told me that I needed permission to do this from Father Michael and Father Michael was in America at the time and didn't return before the spring... but the seeds were not going to wait around for anyone.

I waited around for a few minutes, thinking. Suddenly the gardener's phone rang, and he went downstairs to see who it was. The seed storage was in the greenhouse. Although I knew that the building was equipped with surveillance cameras and that it was very shameful and embarrassing to steal from a place of worship, I took advantage of the gardener's absence. I broke into the greenhouse and opened the closet where they kept the seeds, but the cabinet was full. Hundreds of mailing envelopes contained different kinds of seeds – I was sure he never knew about this, but inside I was ashamed of myself and ashamed that it was the second time I had stolen in my life. The first was a manuscript book I stole from the public library, and the second was this bag of seeds.

But at the same time, I saw myself as a thief with good intentions. The book was rare, and no one will benefit from it but me. The area and the library were exposed to being burnt and stolen at any moment because of the war. These books were left to mice, who, by the way are good readers. I felt shameful because I gave myself excuses to steal with good intentions, but then I remembered a saying that goes: The road to hell is full of good intentions.

When I came out of the monastery, the sky was almost clear except for some scattered white clouds and a beautiful yellow sun disk, but soon a dark cloud obscured the sun; I felt as if it was sometime before sunset.

I arrived home, and my mother was there. I was afraid she would notice my nervousness. I wanted to tell her what I had done but felt ashamed. She was smiling at me and asking me: are you hungry, my dear? Can I make food for you? I told her that I was busy and had to leave to buy seeds to plant in the area. She said: as you like, my dear. I left. I walked around for a while, plotting how I would plant my treasure and imagined what areas would look like when they transform from dry, hot, temperate climates.

When I got home, I planted two seeds in a pot, but they did not live for more than a month. I tried more than once, and they died each time. I felt the seeds were cursed and would never germinate. After two months, I went to the monastery, and I found Father Michael there and told him everything I had done; he smiled and said to me that the gardener told him that there were missing or maybe lost seeds.

Father Michael had brought some seeds of the same tree from America, but with higher quality and faster germination rate. He told me that the seeds I took were old seeds and that he had bought new ones as a gift for me. I thanked him a lot and felt thrilled this time.

I came home, and my mother smiled, and so did I; she asked me: are you hungry? I said: yes, I'm starving. We ate together. I was thrilled, and our lunch was delicious. However, I didn't have it in me to tell her what I had done.

A week later we traveled back to Baghdad and found my brother waiting to greet us.

I was so excited to go back and see my sweet niece Jojo, who is now five or maybe six years old; I don't remember exactly how old she is, as I've never met her before. We've been communicating through the Internet, and she's always waiting for us to return.

Two weeks after our reunion, my mother asked me to plant seeds on the road leading to the Tigris River. Of course, my mother and Jojo took the river path on foot. I did not feel pain in my legs, and JoJo was excited. From Jojo's point of view, what we were doing was something that she was very proud of, especially after witnessing older sister Qamar volunteer with the group that was rehabilitating old books and distributing them back to students.

Jojo said she wanted to plant a whole forest. I told her that my grandfather had participated in cultivating the sides of the road before and had built a three-meter-high dam on the side of the river that protected the area from drowning in the flood season, that she can see to this day.

Wow, she said, the trees are so tall now. Let's plant all our seeds now, and so we did.

My mother was giving us instructions, and Jojo and I were distributing the seeds at four meters between each seed. Jojo was enthusiastic and working with a pure smile that filled her beautiful face. On the same day, all the seeds were planted, and we had a lovely day filled with childish laughter: innocent Jojo and a smile of comfort on my mother's face.

A year later, we went together to the same spot and found that the trees had grown to a height of one meter. We spent the day there and had a beautiful time, like the previous time a year ago. We named the spot the Jojo Forest.

Forty years later Jojo's forest has become a spectacular place for children and their families to enjoy nature. Jojo was all grown up and had become a beautiful, sophisticated university professor and my mother and I had left this world a few years earlier.



Jojo kept visiting her forest consistently every weekend. There were memories of her childhood and adolescence and her graduation party that the whole neighborhood school attended. There she met her first love and where she got married in a stunning dress. She remembered all her memories here and at different times. She remembered and smiled, her little son said: Mama, Mama why are you smiling?

She said to him: I remember the good old days; I remember my grandmother and my uncle and when we planted this forest from tiny seeds and nurtured them until they grew. It is believed in some religions that sanctify nature, like in Asia and the Native American cultures, that good souls can be immortalized in other bodies such as birds and trees; they must be here near us.

The child said: Mom, is that true? I want to plant a whole forest to immortalize your soul here with me forever.

JoJo smiled with tears in her eyes and said: Plant it close to here so that I would visit my grandmother and uncle. During this, there was a bird on the branch behind them listening to their talk, this bird was me, and I was proud of my beloved niece.

Let me fly back up to tell my mum that JoJo knows we're still around and didn't leave her alone. How wonderful, my mother will be thrilled when she finds out.

I reached the big white cloud and called out: Mother, Mother.

My mother answered: Hello, my love, did you eat?

I said: Mother, I am a bird now, and you are a cloud, and you have still asked me the same question every time you have seen me for seventy years or more. I am a bird now and eat a modicum of wheat each week. Don't worry, my love. I came to tell you about something.

She said: I know what you want to tell me.

I said, but how did you know?

She said I am always watching over you in your tree and over her on the ground with her beautiful son. And I can see and hear you. So, when I asked: Have you eaten? I was busy watching the kids and their parents playing, and you were away from your tree.

Mom, you are amazing. I love you so much, I said, and then flew back to be near JoJo and her son.

حلم  
تأليف: امين البدرى

المشهد الأول: حلم

مكان الحلم كان حديقة دير الاباء الياسوعين حديقة جميلة بالنسبة لي لأنها مختلفة ومميزة بأشجارها وازهارها النادرة التي كانت موزعة في كل مكان بشكل غير منتظم او منتظم بعض الاحيان زنبق ورد سوسن اسود سوسن احمر شقائق نعمان والكثير من الاشجار الجميلة منها شجرة ليمون تحمل ثمار جديدة في كل شهر.

كانت الشجرة المفضلة لدي شجرة نادره غير موجوده في الاردن فقط في هذا المكان لا اعرف من زراعتها الشجرة ضخمة مرتفعة ذات ساق مليء بالأشواك الكبيرة التي تشبه زعنفة ظهر سمك القرش كانت الشجرة تشبه اشجار الغابات المسحورة فهي فضيه من جهة سوداء من جهة اخرى وارسلها الى بغداد لأنها مقاومه جدا للمناخ الجاف وقله المياه كنت اطمح ان اخذ هذه البذور الى بغداد لكن لسوء الحظ الفلاح المصري طلب مني بلطف ان استأذن الاب مايكل حتى يسمح لي بجمع البذور والاب مايكل كان في امريكا ويعود في الربيع ولم تكن البذور لتبقى تنتظر .

انتظرت لدقائق افكر وفجأة اتصل شخص ما على جوال المصري وذهب الى الاسفل وكانت خزانة البذور في البيت الزجاجي كنت اعرف ان المبنى مجهز بكاميرات المراقبة وكنت اعرف انه مخجل ومخرج جدا ان اسرق من دار عبادة لكن فعلا انتهزت فرصة ذهاب الفلاح و دخلت البيت البلاستيكي وفتحت خزانة البذور والاسمدة وبحثت عنها بسرعة مثل لص في محل مجوهرات وبسرعة وجدتها في ظرف بريدي مليء بالبذور التي ابحث عنها بسرعة اخذت الظرف كله و خرجت مسرعا من الدير الى الشارع كنت اشعر بالسعادة الحقيقية بداخلي وكنت اتخيل شكل وجه الحارس لو عرف اني اخذت الكيس لكن الخزانة كانت مليئة بالظروف البريذية لمئات الانواع المختلفة من البذور وكنت متأكد انه لم يعرف ابدا بالأمر لكن في داخلي كنت خجل من نفسي واشعر بالعار لأنها كانت ثاني مرة اسرق في حياتي الاولى كانت كتاب للمخطوطات سرقته من

المكتبة العامة والثاني كيس البذور هذا .

وفي نفس الوقت كنت ارى نفسي لص ذو نية حسنة فالكتاب نادر لن يستفيد منه أحد غيري والمنطقة وللمكتبة كانت معرضه للحرق والسرقه في اي لحظه بسبب الحرب والكتب هذه كانت متروكة للفأران وبالمناسبة هم قراء جيدين ثم شعرت بالخجل لأنني ابرر لنفسي السرقه بنية حسنة وتذكرت المثل القائل ان الطريق الى الجحيم مليء بالنواية الحسنه.

المشهد الثاني: تغير الجو

عندما خرجت من الدير كانت السماء صافية تقريبا باستثناء بعض الغيوم البيضاء المتفرقة وقرص الشمس اصفر جميل لكن سرعان ما اتت غيمة داكنة حجبت الشمس شعرت كأني في وقت ما قبل الغروب. وصلت الى البيت وكانت ام موجودة كنت اخاف ان تلاحظ عليه الارتباك كنت اود ان أخبرها بما فعلت لكن شعرت بالخجل كانت تبتسم لي وسألتي هل انت جائع عزيزي هل اعد لك الطعام اخبتها باني مشغول سوف اذهب لشراء بذور اشجار حتى ازرعها قالت لي كما تشاء وخرجت اتمشى في المنطقة لبعض الوقت وأفكر كيف سأزرع كنزي هذا ما هو شكل المناطق التي ستتحول من جافة حارة المناطق معتدلة المناخ. اول ما دخلت البيت قمت بوضع بذرتان في ابيض الزرع لكن لم تعش اكثر من شهر حاولت اكثر من مرة و ماتت جميعا شعرت بان البذور اصبحت ملعونة وانها لن تنبت ابدا وذهبت الى الدير بعد مدة شهرين وكان الاب مايكل موجود واخبرته بكل ما فعلت فابتسم واخبرني ان المصري اخبره بان هناك بذور مفقودة او ربما ضائعة وكان الاب مايكل قد احضر من امريكا بذور نفس الشجرة وجودة اعلى ونسبة انبات اسرع واخبرني باني اخذت بذور قديمة وهذه بعض البذور هدية لي شعرت بالفرح وشكرته كثيرا وفي نفس الوقت كنت اشعر بسعادة حقيقية هذه المرة .

عدت الى البيت وكانت امي تبتسم أيضاً وأنا كنت مبتسم كثيرا وسألتي هل انت جائع قلت نعم انا اتضور جوعا واكلنا معا كنت اشعر بسعادة غامرة وكان غدائنا شههي جدا، ولكن لم أستطع ان أخبرها بما فعلت وبعد اسبوع عدنا الى بغداد وكان اخي بانتظارنا.

ذكريات حفل تخرجها من مدرسة الحي ايضا هناك تعرفت على حباها الاول ومكان حفل زفافها بفستان بغاية الجمال كانت تتذكر جميع ذكرايتها في مكان واحد وازمنة مختلفة كانت تتذكر وتبتسم اثناء هذا قال ابنها الصغير ماما ماما لماذا تبتسمين

قلت له اذكر الايام الجميلة اذكر جدتي وعمي عندما زرنا هذا الغابة من بذور صغيرة ورعيها حتى كبرت هذه الاشجار انا فخورة لأني قمت بذلك أحس بأن جدتي وعمي هنا بالقرب منا أحس وجدهم مع نسيم الهواء اللطيف وصوت غناء العصافير لابد ان ارواحهم هنا انا اشعر بذلك لقد قرأت في الديانات التي تقدر الطبيعة في اسيا وسكان امريكا الاصلين من الهنود ان الارواح الطيبة ممكن ان تخلد في اجسام اخرى مثل الطيور والاشجار لابد انهم هنا بقربنا

قال الطفل امي هل هذا صحيح حقا سوف ازرع غابة كاملة لك حتى اتمكن من تخليد روحك بقربي دائما ابتسمت جوجو وفي عينها بيق دمع وقالت ازرعها بالقرب من هنا حتى أزور جدتي وعمي وفي هذه الاثناء كان هناك عصفور على الغصن خلفهم يستمع لحديثهم كان هذا العصفور انا وكنت فخور بابنة اخي الحبيبة.

دعني الان اطير الى الاعلى لأخبر امي ان جوجو تعرف اننا لا زلنا حولها ولم تركها وحيدة يا للروعة سوف تفرح امي كثيرا وصلت الى السحابة البيضاء الكبير وكنت انا امي امي اجبتني امي بسؤال اهلا حبيبي هل اكلت اجبتها امي انا الان عصفور وانت سحابة وانت تسأليني نفس السؤال كل ما رأيتني منذ سبعين عام او أكثر انا الان عصفور اكل حبة قمح فالأسبوع لا تقلقي علي يا حبيبتني.

انا اتيت لأخبرك عن شيء قالت اعرف ما هو قلت وكيف عرفتني قالت انا ضلي دائما فوقكم انت في شجرتك وهي على المصطبة مع ابنها الجميل وأستطيع رؤيتكم وسماعكم اذا لما سألتني هل اكلت؟ لقد كنت مشغولة في مشاهدة الاطفال واهلهم يلعبون وكنت انت بعيد عن شجرتك امي انت رائعة انا احبك كثيرا سوف اعود بقرب جوجو وابنها الى اللقاء.

كنت متحمس جدا للعودة ورؤية ابنة اخي جوجو العسولة التي الان عمرها خمس سنوات او ربما ستة سنوات لا اذكر تماما كم عمرها ولم يسبق لي من قبل ان قابلتها كنا نتواصل من خلال الانترنت طوال هذه المدة وكانت هي تنتظر عودتنا دائما.

بعد عودتنا بأسبوعين طلبت مني امي زراعة البذور على الطريق المؤدي الى نهر دجلة وفعلنا اخذت امي و جوجو الطريق النهر سيرا على الاقدام لم اكن اشعر بالام في ساقي وكانت جوجو متحمسة جدا فهذا العمل من وجهة نظرها يدعوا للفخر خصوصا انها كانت ترى اختها الاكبر قمر تطوعت في المدرسة في مجموعة اعادة تأهيل الكتب القديمة وتوزيعها على الطلاب مرة أخرى كانت تميل للعمل التطوعي مثل قمر.

اخبرتني جوجو انها سوف تزرع غابة واخبرتها ان جدي كان قد شارك في زراعة جوانب الطريق من قبل وبنا سدة بارتفاع 3متر على جانب النهر تحمي المنطقة من الغرق في موسم الفيضانات واليوم انظري لها.

قالت وواو انها مرتفعة عموو انا اريد ان ازرعها جميعها الان وبالفعل كانت امي توجهنا وانا وجوجو نوزع البذور على مسافات 4 امتار بين بذرة واخرى وكانت جوجو متحمسة وتعمل مع ابتسامة نقية تملء وجهها الجميل وفي نفس اليوم تمت زراعة جميع البذور وقضينا نهار جميل جدا مملوء بالضحك الطفولي البريء لجوجو وابتسامة الراحة في وجه امي .

المشهد الثالث: مرت السنين

ذهبنا معا الى نفس المكان وكانت الاشجار قد نمت بارتفاع متر واحد وقضينا نهار جميل اخر يشبه سابقه من قبل سنه وسمينا هذا الموقع غابة جوجو .

بعد مرور اربعين عاما....

اصبحت غابة جوجو مكان رائع يتمتع فيه الاطفال وعوائلهم للاستمتاع بالطبيعة وكانت جوجو قد اصبحت استاذة جامعية بمنتهى الاناقة والجمال اما انا وامي كنا قد رحلنا عن هذا العالم منذ سنوات.

وكانت جوجو تزور غبتها بشكل دوري كل نهاية اسبوع فهناك كانت ذكريات طفولتها ومراهقتها وهنا

# MY DREAMS

by Amelie Flaure

I am Amelie. From the youngest age of five I dreamed of being married, having children and I promised my aunt that I would bring her to live in Europe, more precisely, France. My aunt was very poor, lived in the village and to give her hope I told her that. I was a twin at birth, and my mother carried us for twelve months of pregnancy. And my twin died at birth. We were born on New Year's Day 1981 (1/1/81) at 7:30 a.m. in the morning. Growing up life was not always as I dreamed. I experienced joys, sorrows, violence, frustrations and even went through depression.

But I'm not giving up. My wildest dream is one day to visit the American continent. My biggest dream, the one I have left to realize before death calls me, is that God give me the opportunity to go and see America, which is my paradise. When I was eighteen my cousin left for America, along with my cousins, leaving the house empty. Although sometimes I tell myself that it is impossible, I remain confident that nothing is over, as long as I am still breathing.

I am a mother of six beautiful children. From an early age I dreamed of working to provide a better life for my children. I saw us all already, without knowing them, in such a beautiful house together with their dad, in peace. But life did not give me the choice and I had to go very far from them without knowing the day when I will see them again. My heart is so heavy and broken every time I think about it or when I talk to them, when I hear them say to me, "Mom, when are you coming back...?" As long as we live, nothing is lost.

Today, my greatest dream is to hold them close, to bring them very far to their dream country, Canada which they talk about all the time. It is the same continent as America. There are all kinds of opportunities and peace, to give them all that lost time and make them forget all the pain that our absence has caused them.

I will give all, I will fight, I will live, I will face all obstacles to have them around me and my happiness will be fulfilled. I love you, my babies.

When I was little, I dreamed of being a good mother and working as a lawyer to defend unjust causes, or a nurse to take care of the sick or the vulnerable. Growing up my parents were so poor that they couldn't pay for my education. So, I did all kinds of training. Like sewing, secretarial work, nurse's aide, everything I saw I did. I started working as a switchboard cashier to provide for my brothers' needs, for their studies, their care, and for their daily expenses. I did it with pride.

I've always fought for the cause of my family, I'm a fighter but I'm still not happy because my goal is that I always want to be in service to the vulnerable, the weak, the oppressed, that's where I feel most myself, but I don't have the possibilities because I am an unknown where I am. I will not lose hope because it is never too late.

# RÊVE

par Amelie Flaure

Je suis Amelie. Depuis mon plus jeune âge de cinq ans je rêvais d'être mariée, avoir des enfants et je promettais à ma tante de l'amener vivre en Europe, plus précisément la France. Ma tante était très pauvre, vivait au village et pour lui donner de l'espoir je lui disais ça. J'étais jumelle à la naissance, et ma mère nous a portées pendant douze mois de grossesse. Et ma jumelle a été décédée à la naissance. Nous sommes nées le jour de l'an 1981 (1/1/81) à sept heures et midi du matin. Grandissant, la vie n'était toujours pas comme dans mes rêves. J'ai connu des joies, des peines, des violences, des frustrations et même je suis passée par une dépression.

Mais je ne baisse pas les bras. Mon rêve le plus fou c'est un jour de visiter le continent américain. Mon plus grand rêve celui qui me reste à réaliser avant que la mort ne m'appelle c'est que Dieu puisse me donner l'opportunité d'aller voir à quoi ressemble l'Amérique qui est mon paradis. Quand j'ai eu dix-huit ans ma cousine est partie pour l'Amérique, ainsi que mes cousins, laissant la maison vide. Bien que parfois je me dis qu'il est impossible, je reste confiante que rien n'est terminé tant que je respire encore.

Je suis mère de six magnifiques enfants. Depuis mon plus jeune âge je rêvais de travailler pour offrir une meilleure vie à mes enfants. Je nous voyais tous déjà sans les connaître dans une si belle maison ensemble avec leur papa, dans une paix. Mais la vie ne m'a pas donnée le choix de partir très loin d'eux sans savoir le jour où je les reverrais.

J'ai le cœur si lourd et brisé à chaque fois que j'y pense ou quand je leurs parle, lorsque je les entends me dire, "Maman, tu reviens quand... ?" Tant qu'on ne vit, rien n'est perdu.

Aujourd'hui, mon plus beau rêve est de les serrer, les amener très loin dans leurs pays de rêve, le Canada, dont ils parlent tout le temps. C'est le même continent que l'Amérique. Il y a toutes sortes d'opportunités et de paix, pour leur offrir tous ce temps perdu et leur faire oublier toute cette peine que notre absence leur a infligé.

Je donnerai tous, je me battrai, je vivrai, j'affronterai tout obstacles pour les avoir autour de moi et mon bonheur sera rempli. Je vous aime, mes bébés.

Quand j'étais petite je rêvais d'être une bonne mère de famille et travailler comme avocat pour défendre la cause injuste, ou infirmière pour prendre soins des malades ou des vulnérables. En grandissant mes parents étaient si pauvres qu'ils n'ont pas pu me payer des études. Alors j'ai fait toutes sorte de formations. Comme la couture, le secrétariat, aide-soignante, tout ce que je voyais je faisais. J'ai commencé à travailler comme standardiste caissière pour subvenir au besoin de mes frères pour leurs études, leurs soins, et pour leurs rations. Je le faisais avec fierté.

Je me suis toujours battu pour la cause de ma famille, je suis une battante mais je ne suis toujours pas heureuse car mon but c'est que je souhaite toujours être au service des vulnérables, des faibles, des opprimés, c'est là que je me sens moi-même, mais je n'ai pas les possibilités car je suis une inconnue où je me trouve. Je ne perdrai pas espoir car il n'est jamais trop tard.

# DREAMS

by Angham Translated from Arabic by Diana Rabie

It's complicated when we talk about the dreams of girls. Every girl has dreams, but the dreams of refugee girls are often the same. That she is safe and isn't subjected to any form of physical harm, "rape", that she can have an education like the rest of the girls in the world, and not be exposed to any kind of violence. To live in a safe place without fear for herself or for her family.

When a girl lives and witnesses all the various forms of torture and violence, she will not be able to forget this for the rest of her life, not even during her sleep.

When I was little in Syria, during the war, I witnessed people being killed and bloodshed on the ground. I saw women being raped and have seen many things that no child in the world can imagine or see.

In Jordan I was exposed to violence at school and, not only that – I was also exposed to a lot of harassment in the streets as well. There was a lot of tension at home too.

It was not easy for me to get a university education at all, but with the support of some people I was able to continue.

When I go to sleep every night, I remember everything. I have nightmares, as if I am still in the war. I feel as if bullets are entering my body and feel the suffering of people that were harmed.

When I was in the seventh grade, my mother gave birth to my brother Walid. My mother was struggling a lot because of my father's health condition and his inability to work. My mother decided to work as a cleaner, she cleaned houses and sought help from charities.

No one was home to look after my little brother Walid but me, A young girl taking care of a child! It was not easy at all for me when he cried. I would cry with him, when we wanted to eat, I didn't know what to do, and when my mother would call me to check on him, I would constantly tell her that he was fine, but the situation couldn't be anything but the opposite. I used to see my mother when she went all day with tears streaming down her cheeks. Walid is now seven years old, and I am twenty. He is the closest to me. And life went on despite it all.

Today we are writing about dreams and it's important that the dreams we write about be beautiful and full of passion and love. But I started with these realistic painful events that happened to me, because it's to them I owe my ability to speak about my dreams passionately.

ان يأكل لا اعرف ماذا افعل له، وعندما كانت تتصل امي بي للاطمئنان عليه كنت اقول لها باستمرار انه بخير ولكن الوضع كان عكس ذلك تماماً، كنت ارى امي عندما تذهب كل يوم دموع على خدها، الان وليد في السابعة من عمره وانا في 20 هو الاقرب لي والحياة استمرت رغم كل ذلك.

اليوم نكتب عن احلام ومن الضروري ان تكون احلامنا التي نكتب عنها جميلة ومليئة بالشغف والحب، ولكن انا بدأت بذلك الاحداث المؤلمة الواقعية التي حدثت لي، التي بسببها استطيع ان اتكلم عن احلامي بكل شغف.



لأحلام  
عندما نتحدث عن احلام الفتيات يكون الأمر أكثر تعقيداً، لكل فتاة احلام ولكن احلام الفتيات اللاجئتين تكون موحدة غالباً، ان تكون الفتاة آمنة دون تعرضها ل اي أذى جسدي (الاغتصاب)، ان تتمكن من تعليم كباقي فتيات العالم، ان لا تتعرض ل اي نوع من انواع العنف، ان تعيش في مكان آمن دون خوف على نفسها وعائلتها.

عندما تعيش الفتاة وتشاهد كل انواع التعذيب والعنف لا تتمكن من ان تنسى اي مشهد عنف ولا اثناء نوم طول حياتها.

عندما كنت صغيرة في سوريا اثناء الحرب، شاهدتُ الناس تقتل ودماء على الارض، شاهدت نساء تغتصب والكثير من الاشياء التي لا يمكن ل اي طفل في لعالم تخيلها وليس مشاهدتها، وفي الاردن تعرضت للعنف في المدرسة ولم يقتصر على ذلك فقط تعرضت للكثير من مضايقات في شارع، وفي المنزل كان يوجد الكثير من التوتر، لم يكن سهل ان أكمل تعليمي الجامعي ابدا ولكن بدعم من بعض الاشخاص استمررت.

عندما اذهب الى النوم كل الليلة اتذكر كل شيء بتدريج اشاهد كوابيس وكأني موجودة الان في الحرب واشعر برصاص دخل في جسدي واتألم كما يتألم الشخص المصاب حقاً.

عندما كنتُ في المدرسة بالصف السابع وامي انجبت اخي وليد، امي كانت انسانة مناضلة حقاً بسبب وضع ابي صحي وعدم قدرته على العمل، قررت امي ان تعمل في تنظيف البيوت وذهاب الى بعض المؤسسات الخيرية كان هذه الأمر بالنسبة لي لفتاة في عمري مخجلاً حقاً، لم يستطيع احد في المنزل راعية اخي صغير وليد الا انا، طفلة تهتم بطفل! لم يكن الأمر سهلاً ابدا بالنسبة لي عندما كان يبكي كنت ابكي معه، عندنا يريد

# A DREAM

by Anonymous

Many years ago. A little girl was born in a family full of love, life was full of much love and happiness, and she had so many dreams.

She wanted to be a nurse or a pharmacist but at the age of twelve things have never been the same when the father died.

Things went from good to bad.

The people I was looking up to are the ones that hurt me the most and took me to the darkest place of life.

At night I really want to sleep but when I close my eyes the things I see aren't the kind of dreams I want to have!

When I get up in the morning I look through the window and ask myself so many questions!

Sometimes I try so hard to think of the past when I was a little girl, sweet memories when I was growing up, my dreams about what I have always wanted to be in life.

But the pain and sorrow of what I have been through are more than me, life is a mystery.

Sometimes you go through things that your mouth cannot even say them.

Things became so bad it was the most terrifying moment of my life, and I didn't think I would survive.

I commit myself in God's hands.

For now I don't even know what to say about my dreams, not because I don't have dreams but because I'm not in a better place to dream, if life gives me a second chance I will be so grateful to God.

So far life has been giving me so many reasons to give up, seeing myself alive today is a mystery I can tell.



**“THINGS WENT FROM GOOD TO BAD.”**



# RÊVE

par Anonyme

Il y a de nombreuses années. Une petite fille est née dans une famille pleine d'amour, la vie était pleine d'amour et de bonheur, et elle avait tant de rêves.

Elle voulait être infirmière ou pharmacienne, mais à douze ans les choses n'ont plus jamais été pareilles à la mort du père.

Les choses sont allées de bien en mal.

Les gens que j'admirais sont ceux qui m'ont le plus blessé et qui m'ont emmené dans l'endroit le plus sombre de la vie.

La nuit, j'ai vraiment envie de dormir, mais quand je ferme les yeux, les choses que je vois ne sont pas le genre de rêves que je veux faire !

Quand je me lève le matin, je regarde par la fenêtre et je me pose tellement de questions!

Parfois, j'essaie tellement de penser au passé quand j'étais petite fille, à de doux souvenirs quand je grandissais, à mes rêves sur ce que j'ai toujours voulu être dans la vie.

Mais la douleur et le chagrin de ce que j'ai vécu sont plus que moi, la vie est un mystère.

Parfois tu traverses des choses que ta bouche ne peut même pas dire.

Les choses sont devenues si mauvaises que c'était le moment le plus terrifiant de ma vie, et je ne pensais pas que j'allais survivre.

Je m'engage entre les mains de Dieu.

Pour l'instant je ne sais même pas quoi dire de mes rêves, non pas parce que je n'en ai pas mais parce que je ne suis pas dans un meilleur endroit pour rêver, si la vie me donne une seconde chance je serai tellement reconnaissante à Dieu.

Jusqu'à présent, la vie m'a donné tant de raisons d'abandonner, me voir en vie aujourd'hui est un mystère que je peux dire.



# MAKEUP ARTIST

by Arlette

I dream of being an entrepreneur, a businesswoman in life, having my own activities, being a makeup artist, having a salon spa, doing cosmetics. To open an orphanage in my country, buy myself a villa in Canada, buy myself a car. I would like to satisfy my customers according to their needs, try makeup on my friend to make her prettier, beautiful and wonderful. To do the face makeup I first apply my cream which will allow my makeup to last a long time. I trace her eyelids, I put on the eye shadow, I put on false eyelashes, I do the tracing of the lips, I apply a lipstick of her choice and I continue to make her up with the liquid powders.

In clothing, favorite colors are reds and pinks. I simply prefer tights, little tops, sneakers. I would also like to do the hair weaving for wigs.

# « MAKEUP ARTIST »

par Arlette

Je rêve d'être entrepreneur « business woman » dans la vie, avoir mes propres activités, être « makeup artist » avoir un salon de spa, faire dans la cosmétique. Ouvrir un orphelinat dans mon pays, m'acheter une villa au Canada, m'acheter une voiture. J'aimerais satisfaire mes clients selon leurs besoins, faire l'essai de makeup sur mon amie pour la rendre plus jolie, belle et magnifique. Pour faire le makeup de visage, j'applique d'abord ma crème qui va permettre à mon makeup de durer longtemps. Je trace ses paupières, je lui mets le fard au-dessus de ses yeux, je mets les faux cils, je fais le traçage sur les lèvres, j'applique un rouge à lèvres de son choix et je continue à la maquiller avec les liquides poudres.

En habillement, les couleurs préférées sont les rouges et les roses. Je préfère simplement des collants, des petits hauts, des tennies. J'aimerais aussi faire le montage de tissage pour les perruques.

# THE DREAM

by Armand

I am in the office with Catherine (Cat), the writer, and by magic, she bears the first name of my adored son, the youngest one, whom I abandoned in my country Cameroon. His name is Kat (Ivo Kat).

My last memory of Kat has stayed in my memory up until today and is practically haunting me this morning. When I was about to leave, he asked me to keep the "Kinder Joys" for him when I returned. And "Bam" I never came back. It's a very sad moment for me to abandon him like this.

Today I find myself at the beach with friends, very far from my children. How can I share these moments of joy when I don't know if Ivo Kat has eaten, or is well and healthy?

I am in front of a novel entitled "The love of the family". I come from a family of five children of which I am the eldest. I assumed my role by taking charge of all my younger siblings until each of them obtained university level. It was a challenge that I had promised myself and I realized it. Also, my dream had been to have a good wife and beautiful children. Providence gave me the opportunity. I have a wonderful wife Amelie whom I love dearly. She gave me many wonderful children to whom I am very attached.

So, I have achieved many of my dreams in my life. There are many of my dreams that I wish to achieve, and my current situation does not allow me to express them.

Every day that passes for me is agony. I don't know what tomorrow could hold for me since I don't even have an identity here in Greece. I am immersed in an abyss, and I see in the distance a glow that looks like a small fire but as I get closer this light goes away. How am I going to get there? I do not know. My friends tell me all the time to hang on to the positive. But no one can be inside me. I would like to express myself, find myself in an environment conducive to professional development; find Ivo Kat and at the same time his brothers.

I don't know but I just realized that I have a bigger dream than the others and this is the one.

**“HOW CAN I SHARE THESE MOMENTS OF JOY WHEN I DON'T KNOW IF IVO KAT HAS EATEN, OR IS WELL AND HEALTHY?”**

# LE RÊVE

par Armand

Je suis dans le bureau accompagné de Catherine (Cat), l'écrivaine, et par enchantement, elle porte le prénom de mon fils adoré et le dernier que j'ai abandonné dans mon pays le Cameroun. Son nom est Kat (Ivo Kat).

Mon dernier souvenir de Kat est resté dans ma mémoire jusqu'ici ce jour, et me hante pratiquement ce matin-là. Lorsque je m'apprêtais à partir il m'a demandé de lui garder le « Kinder Joys » à mon retour. Et « Bam » je ne suis jamais revenu. C'est un moment très triste pour moi de l'abandonner comme ça.

Aujourd'hui je me trouve à la plage avec des amis, très loin de mes enfants. Comment partager ces moments de joie alors que je ne sais pas si Ivo Kat a mangé, ou est bien et en santé ?

Je suis devant un roman intitulé « L'amour de la famille ». Je suis issu d'une famille de cinq enfants dont je suis l'ainé. J'ai assumé mon rôle en prenant charge de tous mes cadets jusqu'à ce que chacun d'eux obtienne un niveau universitaire. C'était là un challenge que je m'étais promis et je l'ai réalisé. Également mon rêve avait été d'avoir une bonne épouse et des enfants magnifiques. La providence m'en a donné l'opportunité. J'ai une merveilleuse épouse Amelie que j'aime profondément. Elle m'a donné beaucoup d'enfants merveilleux dont je suis très attaché.

J'ai donc réalisé beaucoup de mes rêves dans ma vie. Il y a beaucoup de mes rêves que je souhaite réaliser et ma situation actuelle ne me permet pas de les exprimer.

Chaque jour qui passe pour moi est un supplice. Je ne sais pas de quoi demain pourrait être fait pour moi, vu que je n'ai même pas d'identité ici en Grèce. Je suis plongé dans un gouffre et je vois au loin une lueur qui ressemble à un petit feu mais au fur et à mesure que je me rapproche cette lumière s'éloigne. Comment je vais faire pour y arriver ? Je n'en sais rien. Mes amis me demandent tout le temps de m'accrocher sur ce qui est positif. Mais personne ne peut être au dedans de ma personne. Je voudrais m'exprimer, me retrouver dans un environnement propice pour m'épanouir professionnellement ; retrouver Ivo Kat et par la même occasion ses frères.

Je ne sais pas mais je viens de réaliser que j'ai un rêve plus grand que les autres et c'est celui-là.



**“COMMENT PARTAGER CES MOMENTS DE JOIE ALORS QUE JE NE SAIS PAS SI IVO KAT A MANGÉ, OU EST BIEN ET EN SANTÉ ?”**

# LES RÊVES"/THE DREAMS

par Djeanne/by Djeanne

Les sublimes rêves,  
The sublime dreams,

le rêve de marquer l'histoire,  
the dream to shape history,

le rêve de ma grossesse et de voir mon fils naître,  
the dream of my pregnancy and to see my son born,

les rêves même loin d'être réalisables ne sont pas que des manifestations  
pratiques d'un subconscient.  
Dreams even far from being realized are not only practical manifestations  
of the subconscious.

Ils sont vrais parce que la naissance existe.  
They are real because birth exists.

La chance varie au cours de la vie, les rêves varient au cours de la nuit.  
Hier n'est qu'un rêve.  
Chance varies throughout life's path--dreams vary throughout the night.  
Yesterday is but a dream.

Je ne m'attendais pas à tomber en sainte.  
I didn't expect to become pregnant.

Et demain est une vision, mais bien vécu.  
And tomorrow is a vision, but well-lived.

Le fait de pousser l'enfant à la naissance, c'est une force vitale.  
The act of pushing the child at birth, it is a vital force.

La nature est un puissant antidépresseur pour l'homme,  
Nature is a powerful antidepressant for man,

Elle réduit le stress et nous redonne de sens à la vie.  
It reduces stress and gives back sense to life.

Cependant en Afrique nous sommes plus loin de la nature.  
Though in Africa we are further from nature.

A Kinshasa nous n'avons pas de parcs tout autour de nous.  
At Kinshasa we don't have parks all around us.

On doit se déplacer.  
We have to go to them.

Cependant l'Europe nous rapproche.  
But Europe brings us closer.

Il y a des parcs tout près de nos habitations, des arbres, des fleurs, on peut contempler.  
There are parks right near our dwellings, trees, flowers, we can contemplate.

# MA PASSION

by Elisée

I will talk about my dream for the future. First, I just love children. That is my passion. I am the youngest child in the family, I am the tenth in my family. And I had my daughter when I was 19. I like to see how the children play with each other and especially their whims really do me good. When a child wants another's toys and it causes a bit of trouble, I know how to calm down children and teach them the feeling of love and sharing. That's why I am training to be an educator in my country, the Congo. For this I would like to build or have space to supervise the children and share the good times together. The space should have trees for good ventilation and shade. In my country we have mango trees and avocado trees, and the children adore that. There will be lots of games for children, like swing sets. Good classrooms for all the children, rich or poor, orphans or not. Everyone will be treated the same. The day I realize this I will be very content and happy.

# MA PASSION

par Elisée

Je vais parler de mon rêve d'avenir. Premièrement j'aime trop les enfants. C'est là ma passion. Je suis la cadette de la famille, je suis la dixième de ma famille. Et j'ai eu ma fille à l'âge de 19 ans. J'aime voir comment les enfants jouent entre eux et surtout leurs caprices me font vraiment du bien. Quand un enfant veut les jouets d'un autre et ça fait un peu de désordre, je sais calmer les enfants et leur apprendre le sentiment de l'amour et du partage. Voilà pourquoi je fais la formation pour être éducatrice au pays, le Congo. Pour cela j'aimerais construire ou avoir de l'espace pour encadrer les enfants et partager ensemble les bons moments. L'espace doit avoir des arbres pour une bonne aération et l'ombrage. Au pays, nous avons des manguiers et les avocatiers, et les enfants adorent ça. Il y aura pleins de jeux pour les enfants comme des balançoires. Des bonnes salles de classe pour tous les enfants, riches ou pauvres, orphelins ou pas. Tous seront traité de la même façon. Le jour où je réaliserai cela je serais toute contente et heureuse.

# THE DREAM

by Emma

For me the Dream is to make all things possible without pain, or bitterness, without evil.

To only do good around oneself, to love one another.

A world full of color, a fairy rainbow world, with pretty pets, a world where all is possible, full of mysteries, hidden things like treasure, and adventures – to discover extraordinary, marvelous things.

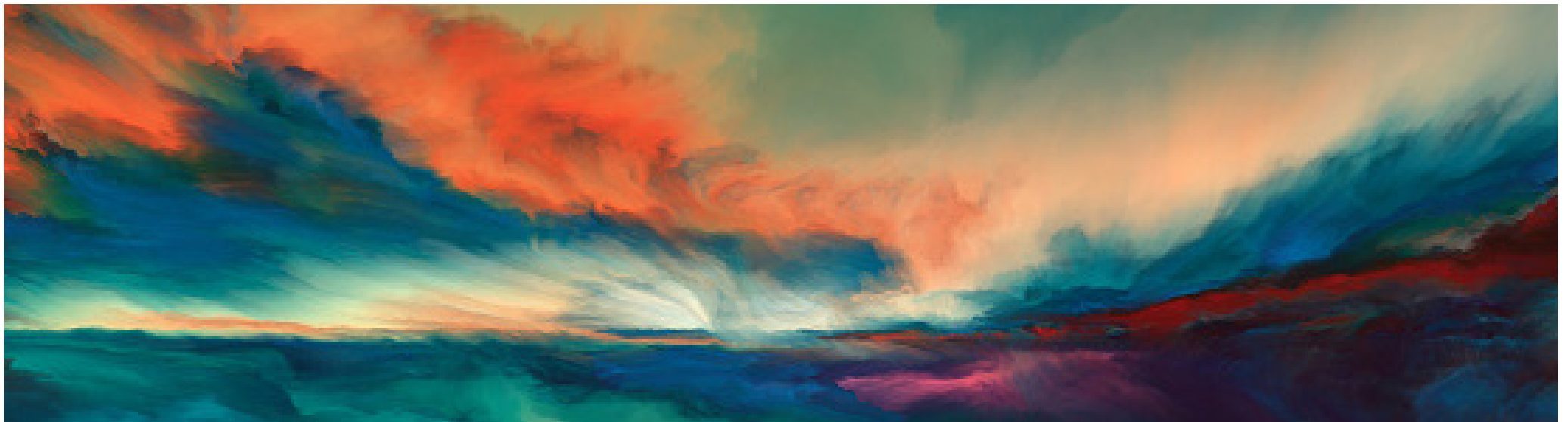
# LE RÊVE

par Emma

Pour moi le Rêve c'est de rendre toutes choses possibles sans douleur, ni amertume, sans le mal.

Ne faire que du bien autour de soi, s'aimer les uns les autres.

Un monde plein de couleur, c'est à dire un monde arc en ciel de fée, de jolis animaux de compagnie, là où tout est possible, plein de mystères, des choses de caché comme un trésor, et d'aventures – de découvrir des choses extraordinaires, merveilleuses.



# ETERNAL LOVE

by Fabiola Monthe

Under a sky of stars  
Drowned in my thoughts  
I relive those past moments  
When we were so in love  
The most beautiful moments of my lived years  
Were those of our adventure  
So passionate and extreme  
We dreamed of the future  
I do not regret anything, but I pray  
That from where you shine  
You will be my angel  
Through the sun  
Through the stars  
Through the moon  
Because we did not choose it  
Without our knowledge life did  
Rest in peace  
My eternal love...

# AMOUR ÉTERNEL

par Fabiola Monthe

Sous un ciel étoilé  
Noyée dans mes pensées  
Je revis ces moments passés  
Lorsque nous étions ci amoureux  
Les plus beaux moments de mes années vécus  
Étaient ceux de notre aventure  
Si passionnés et extrêmes  
Nous rêvions d'avenir  
Je ne regrette rien mais je prie  
Pour que de là où tu brilles  
Tu sois mon ange gardien  
À travers le soleil  
À travers les étoiles  
À travers la lune  
Car nous ne l'avons pas choisi  
À notre insu la vie l'a fait  
Repose en paix  
Mon amour éternel...



# MY MIRAGE/MON MIRAGE

by Fabiola Monthe/par Fabiola Monthe

I had a dream/J'ai rêvé

That I was struggling in a war/Que j'étais en guère, en galère, en misère

That it was raining of refusal, loneliness and incertitude/Qu'il plut de refus,  
de solitude, d'incertitude

Getting tired of that, I ran away/Fatiguée de la fermer, j'ai fugué

To find stability, and freedom/En quête de stabilité, de liberté

My eyes closed, yet the objective was aimed/Les yeux fermés, pourtant l'objectif  
étant visé

Like a dream looking real/Tout comme un rêve au semblable du réel

It seemed to be a flood of interminable water, dark and scary/On aurait dit une  
marre d'eau interminable, ténébreuse et effrayante

I suddenly woke up, my body was shaking, I was afraid /Je me suis réveillée en  
sursaut, le corps tremblant, j'étais apeurée

Sure to have been in a traumatic meeting with the past/Certaine d'avoir été  
à une rencontre traumatique avec le passé

Ouff ! Thankfully it was just a nightmare/Ouff! Bien heureusement ce n'était  
qu'un cauchemar

As all around me there was hope/Car tout autour de moi il y avait de l'espoir

The sunrise on that beach was so prodigious/Le lever de soleil sur cette plage  
était si prodigieux

Like an appeal to peace, the idea of a fruitful tomorrow/Tél un appel à la paix,  
l'idée d'un lendemain fructueux

I dream !/Je rêve !

But not a dream that comes from sleeping/Mais d'un rêve qui n'émaille point  
du sommeil

A dream of a horizon without borders /Le rêve d'un horizon dépourvu de  
frontières

Where the only colors would be those of flowers/Où les seuls couleurs seraient  
celles des fleurs

And humanity will show more love and equality.../Et L'humanité ferait état de  
précellence...

# DREAMS

by Fariba Soltani Translated from Farsi by Parastou Hassouri

Just as every person needs spirit to stay alive, she needs dreams.

For years, I have been weaving dreams and I have been blowing wishes into the balloon of my childhood that release into the sky. And sometimes, I lay my head upon the pillow of my wishes so that I can dream of them when I sleep. You may ask why after releasing the balloon, the sky begins to weep. God himself knows that he has brought me into a world that has driven him to weeping as well.

In the eight months I spent in my mother's belly, I felt the pains of my family, their humiliation, their lack of identity. After that, I didn't want to set foot in a world where sorrow, cruelty, lying, and hypocrisy have taken the place of love and kindness, a place where people put veils upon their faces to call themselves angels, a place where humans live next to one another, but do not accept one another because they are of different races – one black, one white, one Asian – what difference does it make what race and color we are when we all accept one God but just call him by different names? One person speaks to him with hands held together and one with hands held apart.

Now as I write this text, I am no longer a fetus in my mother's belly, but I have grown and I live with my world of 32 years, my past, and now in a country far from my mother and loved ones. It is now very difficult for me to grow and to live.

The country in which I was born never considered me one of their own and for this reason I never reached any of my wishes.

Of course, I have had so many problems in my life that I always had to blow my wishes into my balloon and see them in my dreams. But leaving all this aside, I left the place that never accepted me and migrated to a place that people had constructed as some sort of paradise, a place where on their journey to reach it, people lost their loved ones, and now I am in this country and my life is still suspended in midair. I still don't know if I have an identity or not.

On my way here, many things happened and when I think about those things, my heart ceases beating, and I lose my voice, and my cheeks get wet with tears and even my pen loses its color. On this unfortunate journey, I lost my family, the best part of my life, or even my heart, and now I am apart from them, aging apart from them and I don't know what my life will be without them by my side, and how I can function without them. The only thing that keeps me functioning is the thought of seeing my mother next to me and I hope that after writing down my thoughts and worries, our peerless God can hear me and make this wish come true.

In the end I want to embrace and thank the woman whom I think of as my second mother, whom I have not had the fortune to meet yet, to tell her, you are an angel that has come from God and you are taking women of your own generation and giving them life and hope and motivation; what you are doing is so commendable and I will never forget your kindness, for all my life, I will keep it in a corner of my heart and one day, when I achieve my dreams and have the ability to help others, I will continue in your path.

میشوم و نمی دانم سرنوشتم بدون خانواده ام چه می شود و چطور می توانم خودم را سرپا نگاه دارم البته تنها دلیلی که می تواند من را سرپا نگاه دارد دیدن مادرم در کنار خودم هست کاش بعد از نوشتن درد و دل هایم خدای بی همتای من را بشنود و ان را به حقیقت پیونداند و در آخر میخوامم از زنی که او را مادر دوم خودم میدانم و هنوز خوشانس نبودم تا او را ببینم و در اغوش بگیرم و سپاسگذاری کنم و بگویم تو فرشته ای که از سمت خدا آمده ای و دخترانی را که از نسل خودت هست را داری با تمام وجود به آنان زندگی و انگیزه و امید می بخشی و این کار تو قابل ستایش است و هرگز نخواهم این محبت بی ربای شما را فراموش کنم بلکه در زندگیم ان را در گوشه ای از قلبم نگاه میدارم و زمانی که به موفقیت هایم رسیدم و توان کمک به دیگران را داشتم راه شما را ادامه خواهم داد



همان گونه که هر انسان به روح نیاز دارد تا زنده بماند همان قدر هم به رویا نیاز دارد سال هاست رویا می بافم و آرزوهایم را در بادکنک بچگیم فوت می کنم و آن را در آسمان رها میکنم و گاهی سرم را روی بالش آرزوهایم می گذارم تا رویا ببینم در خواب هایم شاید با خودت بگویی چرا بعد از رها کردم بادکنک آسمان شروع به گریستن می کند خدا خودش خوب می داند مرا به دنیایی آورده است که خودش از دست آنان گریان است. هشت ماه در شکم مادرم بودم شنیدم حس کردم دردهای خانواده ام را تحقیر شدنشان را بی هویتیشان را بعد از آن دوستش نداشتم هرگز پا به دنیایی بگذارم که غصه و بی رحمی دروغ و ربا جای گزین عشق و محبت شده است جایی که ادم ها نقاب به صورتشان می زنند و خود را فرشته خطاب می کنند دنیایی که انسان ها در کنار هم زندگی می کنند ولی همدیگر را قبول ندارند چون از نژادهای مختلفی هستند یکی سیاه یکی سفید یکی زرد چه فرقی می کند از چه نژاد و رنگی هستیم وقتی همه ما یک خدا را قبول داریم فقط به روش خودمان او را صدا می کنیم یکی با دست باز یکی با دست بسته یکی فقط با او سخن می گوید حال که من این متن را مینویسم دیگر یک جنین نیستم در شکم مادرم من بزرگ شده ام و به دنیای سی و دو سالگی ام پا گذاشته ام و در کشوری دور از مادرم و عزیزانم زندگی میکنم. حال زندگی کردن و بزرگ شدن برای من خیلی دشوار هست در کشوری که به دنیا ادمم هیچ گاه مرا یکی از خودشان ندانستند بخاطر همین هیچ گاه به ارزشهایم نرسیدم البته انقدر مشکلات زیادی در زندگیم داشتم که باید همیشه آرزوهایم را فوت می کردم درون بادکنکم یا در خواب هایم رویا می دیدم حال از همه اینها بگذریم جایی که هرگز مرا قبول نداشتند انجا را ترک کردم و بجایی کوچ کردم که مردم انجا را بهشت برای خودشان ساخته بودند بهشتی که مردم در مسیرش عزیزانشان را از دست دادن حال در این کشور هستم و هنوز زندگی من معلق روی هواست و نمی دانم ایا هویتی دارم یا نه . در مسیر سفرم اتفاق های زیادی رخ داد که وقتی به آنان فکر میکنم قلبم دیگر کار نمی زند و صدایم در نمی آید و گونه هایی از شدت گریه خیس می شود و حتی قلمم دیگر رنگ پس نمی دهد در این سفر ناگوار من خانواده ام را بهترین بخش زندگی شاید قلبم را از دست دادم و الان دارم دور از آنان بزرگ یا شاید پیر

# FATI'S DREAMS

by Fatemeh Jafari Translated from Farsi by Parastou Hassouri

**Fati:** "Guys, let's write our dreams!"

**Ahmad:** "Yeah, let's write them!"

**Ma'soum:** "Let's go!"

**Fati:** "I'll write them, tell me, Ahmad, what is your dream?"

**Ahmad:** "My dream is to become a very rich person who would help others."

**Fati:** "What do you mean by 'rich'? How much?"

**Ahmad:** "I'd like to have 100 million dollars in my bank account, I'd like to win the Oscar for the films I'd make; the films that will change people's lives and make them more aware of the world they live in..."

**Fati:** "Ma'soum, it's your turn! What do you want in your life?"

**Ma'soum:** "My dream is to become a very famous fashion designer and to design clothes, accessible to all people who will feel good in them... but, what's your own dream, Fati?"

**Fati:** "I'd like to be a yoga ambassador, have a million dollars at least, be the most powerful and influential woman on the planet, become an entrepreneur, find love in my life, and all to help other people... but... have you noticed that everything you want to do ends up helping people? Why do you think this is so? I think that this life and this world, are not as serious as we think, everything is going on, and the last and only thing we want is a kind of inner peace, to be satisfied with ourselves, and to be calm, and it is helping others that can give us that. What do you think of it?"

**Ma'soum:** "I think this is partly true; it may also be due to the help we received in Moria camp. They showed us that helping others can be extremely important, and we can't ignore the role of NGOs, and all those people... in fact, I don't want to be pretentious when I help others. On the contrary, I'd like to help others in a very good way..."

Fati thought of all these people... people who had helped her, and others who had blessed her: "I'm not sure how I feel about that..."

She looked at herself and thought about how her dreams had changed... she thought about her childhood dreams. A girl, with a skirt, big pants under the skirt, a long dress, and a scarf askew, watching "Shrek" and the scene in which he saves Fiona from the castle. Fati dreams of a hero, a green one who'd come and save her.

Fati studies at the Afghani school; she enters the classroom in the basement where the children are sitting on the floor and her beautiful teacher with stylish eyebrows whom she likes very much hits a child with a ruler because he played with girls. Fati dreams of being a beautiful and strong woman who is more powerful than the boys...

Fati always plays with a girl who is four years older than her: a game with blankets, with the green ones having a leopard painted on them. They wrap themselves in these blankets and become like worms and start walking around the house. This girl is the sister of her uncle's wife who lives with them in a room.

Fati sees that girl again who is beaten by her uncle; she hides, until her uncle leaves the house and takes the girl's dolls from the trash, the dolls are naked and that's why she was beaten by the uncle. Fati thinks she wants to be more powerful than this oppressive uncle so she could get rid of him. This is the first time she needs something, not someone. Maybe more power than her uncle's... This girl is now married and has two children: a boy and a girl. She no longer lives with Fati's uncle and now it is her husband who beats her...

Fati is about 12 years old, and studies in an Iranian elementary school. Their uniforms are dark red like the color of a liver, with gray scarves. She hates these colors...

When she is at home, she can see the window of her class from there.

Unfortunately, she studies in a school that is exactly across the street from her house and it makes her sad that she can't walk with her classmates between school and home.

One evening, on her way home from school, on the iron staircase, she sees a mother who is nine months pregnant and going to see the midwife. These iron stairs make a lot of noise, and the window of her uncle's family room looks out onto the iron hallway on the upper floor, which is square in the middle, and you can see the yard and the sky. Looking up, Fati sees a bunch of stars, they look like the English letter "L"; very beautiful and interesting.

She looks at them and wishes for happiness and joy, she still feels a little numb and keeps repeating these words: "For sure, I'll be happy if I live in my own house, separate from my uncle's" – so she and Fati's mother would not be beaten because of the uncles, their wives, and their children... The dream of a house of their own...

Fati wears the Arab chador to school. It is long, wide, and black, and she is forced to wear it because she has grown up, and her breasts are now more visible, but she hates it.

She has a good friend and goes to her house after her sewing work every night and for only half an hour. They are always at home at those times, gathering, the father of the family has just come home from work and brought fresh bread and together they have their aperitif: sweet tea with fresh and warm bread... Mmm... Yum... Her friend's father is a nice man, he has six daughters, Fati's friend is the eldest... the father is nice to all of them and laughs with them. Fati envies having such a father; she hates her father, her uncles and all the men around her.

It's 8:30 in the morning and she's late for school. She hurriedly puts her chador in her bag to wear before coming home. She waits for her father to go to the bathroom, and quickly comes out. Her school is now farther away than their home. At the end of the second alley, she sees her father driving his motorcycle and stopping in front of her. He takes Fati's hair and drags her home...

Fati didn't reach the school that day and was beaten hard, because she wasn't wearing her chador... she hugged her knees to her stomach and fell asleep. Fatemeh dreamed that her father had died, and that she was happy and free. She wished she didn't have her father anymore...

Fati is now 19 years old, she is in aerobics class, she dances. At the end of the class, the instructor tells them to lie down on the floor for Shavasana.

Fati doesn't know what's going on, her teacher says, "Just lie down and close your eyes and listen to my words." She continues:

"Imagine that you are walking on a beautiful beach and feel the sand under your feet and the warmth of the sun on your body and listen to the sound of the waves"; as her eyes were closed, her tears flowed, she felt freedom and this feeling made her heart cry; the instructor continued: "feel the sunlight entering your body and every cell of it; you will be overwhelmed with happiness..." For the first time, Fati saw herself free and far away from her gender, even from being an Afghan. She cried for the happiness and freedom she had felt at that moment. This time, Fati dreamed of going to the beach and having her own house...

Fati is now 24 years old and is waiting for food at the migrant camp in Greece – Lesbos island.

She has her small orange notebook with her that she brought with her from Iran and writes a few English words to practice because she needs to wait for about two to three hours. It is there that, for the first time, she sees the word "refugee" and understands what it means. It means that is what she and all the women waiting for food there are...

Every night, when Fati wants to sleep, she dreams of bright days that are going to arrive one by one. She dreams of traveling to different countries. To India!

Fati, now, again it is June 2022:

**Fati:** “Ma’soum, I used to have dreams when I was a child, but I didn’t dare to think about them, it seemed very impossible to me, and instead, I wished for everything, only the wishes that when I was scared, sad and tired, the wishes that the circumstances forced me to have.”

**Ma’soum:** “And today?”

**Fati:** “Today, my heart is as big as the sea and my dreams as big as the sky. I feel that my soul is free to go wherever it wants.

I feel like I have been released from the cage of my childhood. I am sure that I had dreamed of today, the dream of independence and sitting next to my friends and thinking freely about whatever I want.



رویا

فاطی : بچها بیاین رویاهامونو بنویسم ؟

احمد : اره بیاین

معصوم : منم موافقم

فاطی : من مینویسم شما بگین ، احمد تو رویات چیه ؟

من رویام اینه که یه آدم خیلی پولدار بشم که بقیه کمک میکنه

: فاطی :چقد پولدار ؟ اندازه شو بگو

احمد من ۱۰۰ میلیون دلار تو حسابم دارم ،من میخوام اسکار بگیرم بخاطر فیلم هام ، و فیلم هایی که

میسازم زندگی مردم رو تغییر

میده و مردم رو آگاه میکنه از دنیایی که زندگی میکنند

فاطی : معصوم نوبت توئه تو چی میخوای از زندگیت ؟

معصوم: من زویام اینه که یه طراح لباس خیلی معروف بشم و لباس هایی طراحی کنم که برای همه قابل

دسترسی باشه و باهاش

احساس خوبی داشته باشند

معصوم : فاطی رویای خودت چیه ؟

من میخوام سفیر یوگا باشم

حداقل یک میلیون دلار پول داشته باشم میخوام قوی ترین و ثروتمند ترین و تاثیر گذارترین زن دنیا باشم

کار آفرین باشم و عشق رو توی زندگیم پیدا کنم

میخوام کارهایی که میکنم به آدم ها کمک کنه

فاطی یهو میگه : دقت کردین هرکاری که میخواین بکنین تهش میرسه به کمک کردن به آدم ها چرا ؟

دوباره فاطی بنظرم تهش زندگی و این دنیا اونقد جدی نیست و تهش میگذره و آخرش هممون میخوایم

یه آرامش درونی میخوایم که

راحت و راضی از خودمون بخوایم و کمک کردن و تاثیر گذاشتن رو زندگی ادمها اینو بهمون میده

فاطی شم اچی فکر میکنید؟

معصوم : من فکر میکنم این تا بخشی درسته و بخشی ازشم بخاطر تجربه هامونه آدم هایی که توی کمپ

موریا به م کمک کردن

آدم هایی که باعث من فکر کنم من نمیکم ام به کمکگر متظاهر باشم دوست دارم به روشی درست به

مردم کمک کنم باعث شده انقد

کمک کرپن اهمیت داشته باشه

دوباره معصوم : واقعا کلا همه آدم هایی که دیدم تو راه قاچاق توی کمپ ، ngo ها خیلی روی این طرز

بکرمون تاثیر گذاشتن

فاطی فکر کرد به همه ی ادمهایی که دیده بود آدم هایی که کمکش کرده بودند آدم هایی که بهش

صدمه زده بودند

من مطمئن نیستم چی فکر کنم ؟

فاطی یه لحظه خودش رو نگاه کرد و فکرکرد چقدر رویاهش تغییر کردند

و به رویاهای دوران بچگیش فکر کرد

روای من رویای دختر کوچیکی که که دامن تنشه و یک شلوار گشاد زیر دامنش و یک پیراهن استین بلند

و روسریه کج و کوله-

اش داره فیلم شرک رو میبینه و فیونا رو که شرک نقش اصلی انیمه از قلعه نجات میده

فاطی رویای داشتن یک قهرمان رویای داشتن یه گول سبز میکنه که بیاد نجاتش بده

فاطی میره مدرسه ی افغانستان اونج اوارد کلاس که میشه توی زیرزمین کوچیک بچها روی زمین نشستند و

معلم خوشگلش با -



ابروهای کمندش که فاطمی زیبایشو همیشه تحسین میکنه و همیشه ازش خوشش میاد، داره به بچه رو میزنه باخط کش بدستش چون با دخترا بازی میکرده. فاطمی رویای بودن یه معلم سرسخت و خوشگل رو میکنه که زورش از پسرا بیشتره فاطمی توی خونشون همیشه با یه دختری که از خودش شاید ۴ سال بزرگ تره همیشه پتو بازی میکنه، پتو های سبز نقش پلنگی - رو پهن میکنن و از گوشه ی لوزی اش خودشون لول میکنن بعد مته کرم تو خونه راه می رن، اون دختر خواهر زن عموشه که با عمو و زن عموش تو یه اتاق زندگی می کنند فاطمی

ان دختر رو میبینه که عموش داره کتکش میزنه فاطمی قایم میشه تا عموش بره و بعد میره عروسکای دختره رو از سطل اشغال درمیاره و برمیکردونه به اون دختره، داشت بخاطر همونا داشت کتک میخورد که عروسکاش لخت بودند، فاطمی با خودش فکر میکنه که من شاید یه عامله قدرت نیاز دارم تا از دست این عموی ظالم رها بشیم این اولین بار بود که فکر میکرد خودش به چیزی نیاز داره نه به کسی، شاید زور زیاد داشتن قدرت داشتن بیشتر از عموش اون دختر ازدواج کرده و دوتا بچه داره یه پسر یه دختر الان دیگه خونه ی شریکی خانواده فاطمی خانواده عموهای فاطمی نیست و - بجای عموی فاطمی از شوهرش کتک میخوره، فاطمه کلاس دوم راهنماییه و مدرسه ی ایرانیا میره رنگ مانتوی مدرسشون قرمزه جیگریه با مغنعه ی طوسی حالش از ترکیب رنگ لباس مدرسه بهم میخوره ، پنجره ی کلاش رو میتونه از

توی خونه ببینه مدرسشون شانسی روبرویه خونشونه متنفره از اینکه مدرسشون انقد نزدیکه نمیتونه با دخترا توی راه رفت برگشت مدرسه باشه و وقت بگذرونه! یک شبی بعد از مدرسه مادر نه ماهه باردار رو میبینه که داره میبزنش پیش دکتر مام افاطمی از پله های اهنی پرسروصدا که بالا میاد پنجره اتاق عموش اینا به سمت راهرو ی اهنی طبقه ی بالا که وسطش حالت مربع بازه و میتونی حیاط پایین زو ببینی از اونجا و بیرون و اسمون رو فاطمی یه دسته از ستاره رو میبینه شبیه ال انگلیسی کناره هستن بنظرش خیلی زیبا و جالب میاد و به اونها نگاه میکنه و آرزوی خوشبختی و شادی میکنه، هنوز کمی احساس بی حسی و داره به این کلمات و فکز میکنه حتم اخوشبختی این میشه که خونه جدا از عموهای داشته باشم دیگه مادر فاطمی بخاطر عموها و زن عموها و بچه های عموها کتک نمیخوره خود فاطمی هم همینطور رویای خونه ی جدا فاطمی الان چادر عربی سرش میکنه وقتی میره مدرسه این جاذب شبیه مانتو ی خیلی گشاده تا پیش پای آدم ولی رنگ مشکی و قسمت سرش مته سال دراز تا جلوی پای آدم هست الان مجبوره مدرسه هم چادر بپوشه ولی ازش متنفره ولی قدش بلند شده و سینه هاشم دراومده باید بپوشه یه دوست خوب داره فاطمی که دم های غروب بعداز کار خیاطی میره خونشون برای یه نیم ساعت همیشه اون موقع ها خونه ی

اونا شلوغه همشون دورهم جمع میشن باباشون تز سرکار اومده متون داغ آورده و کنار هم عصرون میخورن چای شیرین با نون داغ به به بابای دوستش خیلی ادم مهربونیه شیش نا دختر قد ونیم قد داره و دوست فاطمی بزرگ ترینه و باهمه ی دخترا مهربونه وشوخی میکنه فاطمی حسرت میخوره حسرت داشتن همچین پدری فاطمی از پدرش و عموهاش و مردای اطرافش متنفره، ساعت ۸:۳۰ صبح شده و فاطمی مدرسهش خیلی دیر شده چادرش میذاره داخل کیفش که برکشتنی دم در خونه سرش کنه صبر میکنه باباش بره دسشویی همین که رفت سریع از خونه زد بیرون دوید به سمت مدرسه الان دیگه خونشون از مدرسه دوره کوچه ی دوم باباش رو دید که باموتور جلوش سبز شد از ترس پاهاش لرزید احساس کرد نمیتونه وایسه، باباش موتورش رو تو کوچه ول کرد و تا خونه از موهای فاطمی گرفتش و توی کوچه کشون کشون بردش خونه، فاطمی به مدرسه نرسید وکلی کتک خورد چرا چون چادر نپوشیده بودفاطکه زانوهایش توی شکمش بغل کرد و خوابش برد، فاطمه تو خوابش دید که باباش مرده و فاطمی وخوشحال و رهائه فاطمه ارزو کرد اروزی نداشتن پدر فاطمه الان ۱۹ سالشه توی کلاس ایروبیگ هست میرقصه اخر کلاس مربی بهشون میگه که روی زمین دراز بکشین بریم شاواسانا

فاطمه نمیدونه چ خبره معلمش میگه فقط کافیه دراز بکشی و چشمهاتو ببندی و به حرفهای من گوش کنی، مربی : تصور کنید در یک ساحال بسیار زیبا درحال قدم زدن هستید و شن هارو پاهاتون احساس کنید نور و گرمای خورشید روی بدنتون احساس کنید صدای موج هارو گوش کنید، فاطمه همینطور که چشمانش بسته بود اشک هاش سرازیر شد احساس آزادی کرد و این احساس قلبش رو به گریه انداخت اون خانم ادامه داداحساس کنید نور خورشید داره وارد بدنتون میشه و به تک تک سلول های بدنتون میرسه و شما بااین نوز غرق خوشبختی میشید،فاطمه برای اولین بار حتی با تصورش خودش رو ازاد دید رها و دور از جنسیتش دور از افغان بودنش گریه کرد گریه ی خوشحالی و آزادی که احساس کرده بود فاطمی اینبار رویای دیدن ساحل کرد و داشتن خونه ی خودش

# MY DREAM OF THE FUTURE

by Frasier Iwedi

I dream of being a businessman, and I need to build an orphanage center to help and support the orphans, even the disabled, because it will, really, be a big center. And then there will be several bedrooms and kitchens, and I want the center to be near the river, with trees, flowers, and the river will be very clean and sweet-watered. I imagine the color of the river will be white, with some color blue, and there will be a place next to the river reserved for children to swim. And then next to the trees, there will be swing sets, etc. The center that I need to build will not only be for orphans, but also for children who are having difficulty living: who have difficulty studying, difficulty eating, who have serious problems that require help to be happy and healthy. I will consider them as my children.

For example, if one of them asks me for something when I don't have it, I will answer them out of love: yes, my daughter, my son, I understand, but for the moment I don't have it, please my child – in three days I will bring it to you. And then when I bring it to them, I'm going to call the child: my daughter, come and take what you asked for. When she comes, I give it to her with a smile filled with joy and she too will be very happy, so I will really be there to support them, to help them. And then I know that the children there will be very well educated because in my center there will be male and female educators for children, so they will be very well supervised – so that is my dream for the future.



# MON RÊVE D'AVENIR

par Frasia Iwedi

Je rêve d'être un homme d'affaires, et je dois construire le centre d'orphelinat pour aider et soutenir les orphelins, voir même les handicapés, parce que ça sera vraiment un grand centre. Et puis il y aura plusieurs chambres et des cuisines, et je souhaite que le centre soit auprès de la rivière, avec des arbres, des fleurs, et la rivière sera très propre et douce. J'imagine la couleur de la rivière sera blanche, avec un peu de couleur bleu, et il aura un endroit à côté de la rivière réservé pour les enfants pour nager. Et puis à côté des arbres, il aura des jeux de balançoires, etc... Le centre là que je dois construire sera pas seulement pour les orphelins, mais aussi pour les enfants qui rencontrent des difficultés de vivre : qui rencontrent des difficultés pour étudier, des difficultés pour manger, qui ont des sérieux problèmes qui demandent l'aide pour qu'ils soient heureux et en bonne santé. Je vais les considérer comme mes enfants.

Par exemple si l'un parmi eux me demande quelque chose au moment où je ne l'ai pas, je vais lui répondre par amour : oui, ma fille, mon fils, je comprends, mais pour le moment je ne l'ai pas – s'il te plait mon enfant, dans trois jours je vais te l'amener. Et puis quand je l'amène je vais l'appeler : ma fille, viens prendre ce que tu m'avais demandé. Quand elle vient, je lui donne avec un sourire rempli de joie et elle aussi sera très contente, donc je serai là vraiment pour les soutenir, pour les aider. Et puis je sais que les enfants là ils seront très bien éduqués parce que dans mon centre il y aura des éducateurs et des éducatrices pour les enfants, donc ils seront très bien encadrés, donc voilà mon rêve de l'avenir.



**“J'IMAGINE LA COULEUR DE LA RIVIÈRE SERA BLANCHE, AVEC UN PEU DE COULEUR BLEU, ET IL AURA UN ENDROIT À CÔTÉ DE LA RIVIÈRE RÉSERVÉ POUR LES ENFANTS POUR NAGER.”**

# IN THE HOPE OF PEACE

by Hadi



Migration means moving from one place to another, which is very common among animals, especially among birds. Long-distance migrations occur throughout the year. People and animals travel across oceans, mountains, rivers and plains to reach their destination; they travel to find a better place, to get enough water and food.

Among us, thousands of people migrate every day. We decide to emigrate for reasons such as food and water, or for political issues that are common only among humans: religious issues, war, minority problems, color, race, and nationality. In short, we leave in search of true freedom and security, hoping for a peaceful life.

Thousands of years ago, migration was much easier among us humans, at least there were no borders and passports, no police, and generally fewer “robots” that made the route impossible for migrants! Which will be discussed in the following pages. In the past, people used more traditional ways to relocate, some to start a family, some for livelihood and agriculture, and some left their home due to war and religious conflict.

Unfortunately, humans consider themselves more powerful than other creatures and have continued their oppression year after year. They also see this superiority among themselves, destroying nature to build roads, railways, recreation centers, and war academies. They pollute the sea and oceans with oil, gas and garbage, and hunt the creatures inside it and destroy their world, hunt animals and birds, make clothes and tools from their skins to show off their power.

They put the animals in cages and fight for animal rights, nature and peace!

Here are the real-life stories of immigrants, how they start migrating for various religious and ethnic reasons and the war of powers, and what walls they see in their way – and unfortunately it continues!

If you are silent for a moment and think, it is easy to see that human beings have their own power between each other, power due to wealth, skin color or geographical location; the power of race, of religious affiliation and of education level. Through these and other identities human beings create a sense of superiority over others.

These issues are more common among common people, but the most dangerous imbalance of power arises when it encompasses many people. We see this manifested in the power of dictators, those who have held power all their lives. For them, killing and displacing people are not so very different. Some took their power by waging war or manipulating religious divisions, some through geographical chance. And these same powers make laws and decisions every year, even monthly and daily, that displace and kill millions. Then, most interestingly, these same leaders come and condemn the displaced!

In the following pages, with real stories, you will learn better the effects of such power on human lives, especially those of immigrants; you will better see the dark reality of world powers.

Many forced migrations are caused by war. In the Middle East right now, many ideological and civil wars have left countless people homeless. Innocent people who lose their homes and communities, their jobs and their lives overnight, and with them go all their memories. They forfeit all their past lives when they leave!

There is another migration that comes from a particular kind of poverty, that of dictatorships. In the Middle East, in countries like Iran, people live under a strict dictatorship. The balance between human beings makes very little sense; life is based on how one's ancestors lived, imposed in turn on the next generation.

We should take a deeper look. X, an immigrant who described his life in Iran, lived in a village in the northern half of Iran. X lived in a Lak (Kurdish) family, religious and simple; born in a village where all its people had a religious and simple life; their livelihood was livestock and agriculture; their traditional and unique ceremonies, joys and weddings were the same as ever.

A large number of young people got married every year according to a special custom based on the distant past of their ancestors! X had a "simple life" with all the hard obligations of a villager, such as growing all kinds of fruits, rice and vegetables, as well as building houses in the traditional manner, with materials extracted from the mountains and soil. X lived how their ancestors lived years ago: they worked, talked, made friends, celebrated, played, walked, abided by certain morals and behavior, and sometimes found time for free thought.

They were trying to do what they learned from their fathers in the best possible way without any questions! There were probably 100 families living in that village, some family members reached more than eight to ten members, about which they would say, "Unfortunately, the population of girls is more than boys!"

Living in that village there were strange and simple rules, like many other villages in Iran. People kept pets there; early in the morning the girls and housewives taught the children what to do when they grew up, the same shape they learned from their mothers! After that, women prepared breakfast for the rest of the family, their brothers and fathers! They had only three or four pre-dawn hours to prepare food, take the animals to pasture, return, tidy the house, care for the animals, and then walk miles away to reach the river... A tiny village, where they farmed and cultivated rice, barley and grass, and other summer crops, where they spent most of their lives, developed personalities, cherished thoughts.

In fact, the number of children in that village and many other villages was a sign of that family's power, as was the slavery of the girls in that house!

After all this, X says, the family members sat in a room and started a conversation that was determined "only" by the father or one of the brothers! At that time, in that room, there were more than ten people. The parents of the family went to bed at the very beginning of the night. The brothers and sisters of the family started joking and telling stories that had happened to them during the day or in the past. They talked about getting married as soon as possible and leaving the house, to live freely, to be seen, to be heard, to have some portion of real freedom. The girls were told that talking to other family members, especially their brother and father, was a kind of disrespect and outside the principles of their past and the rest of the village; their only hobby was talking to one of their sisters who lived in the city!

Daughters in that village had similar plans: working non-stop and hoping to be in the city for a week. They tried to save some money, hoping once per year to escape from their town. To stay away from the dictatorial atmosphere of the house at least for some days! In the city, where they could make decisions, dress freely, walk freely, speak freely and think freely, where you have not been shut indoors because you are a woman; the city, where they had more room to speak. But inside the city, of course, they also had their own issues...

### **Immigrants route**

Immigrants travelling their route: on the road, in the woods, at the coast. Among them you see people who, old and young, were tired of their past lives, yet they embark on a journey, even if it endangers their lives. It does not matter. They left behind their family and friends and the place where they were born. They try to achieve a more peaceful life. Among them you see mothers with newborn babies, most of whom were forced to marry; their past was a struggle against ideology, war on a smaller scale. You see children who have lost their families in front of their eyes; you see fathers who have lost their children; you see lonely girls and boys who have been forced to live in ways that torment them! There are many of them who have been forced to part with their friends and family **in the middle of their journey to Europe** for various reasons, such as difficult roads and not having enough money to pay to smugglers. Some of them, alone, look after a nine- or ten-year-old child, in a foreign country, without knowing the language, without a place to sleep, without food and security. Please understand, these are almost the worst conditions for a child, who suffers from various incidents of sexual abuse and drug trafficking and in many cases dies!

Children. Children who are forced to work tirelessly from the beginning of the journey: to find water and food, perhaps to make some money to continue the journey, doing from childhood what many adults must do to survive. Think of their family and friends who could not leave their country.

Often in the country where immigrants arrive, the economic situation is not very good. Uncountable immigrants arrive annually in countries like Iran, Turkey and Greece. Immigrant children are again the worst victims of this hardship. In a country like Iran, the society and government are not friendly toward immigrants and there are no children's rights. In Turkey and Greece, large and more "developed" countries, overt slavery continues, with extreme inequality between employers and migrant workers. Young and old immigrants forced to work for very low wages. Employers live with virtual impunity for however they treat the immigrants. They give only food, water, a place to sleep every day. There are many children forced to work without pay; there are girls and women and even young boys forced to have sex to survive! In a country like Turkey, you see many immigrants asleep on the streets, in parks and terminals. And after all this, many of them get deported by police back to the country they had fled!

Thousands of migrants are living far away from their families in different locations of the world in Turkey, in the hope of opening the border in Turkey! They watch the media and the news every day hoping that borders may open, that they might at long last reach their destination. Every year a new game of governments and powers! But the losers are always the immigrants!

At the end of February 2020, Turkey announced that it had opened all its land and sea borders to European asylum seekers due to Europe's lack of support for Turkey in the Syrian war. The migrants – women, children, old and young – all moved to the Greek border. The Turkish police allowed them to cross, but the Greek border police prevented them with attacks of tear gas. Many migrants were injured and lost what little money they had saved for their journey!



## Arrival

Living in Moria camp for many of us who have not tasted immigration can be unbelievable. In there, life is based on sheer luck! With no exaggeration, it's like a war zone, you must fight to survive. You fight not only knives and violence, but you forget the negligence of the state, you fight hunger, you fight despair. Men, women and children, inhabit the camp as though in the middle of a battlefield. The wounds to their mental health will not get better for the rest of their lives. Such a camp, which had an original capacity of 2,500 people, housed more than 20,000 asylum seekers. Of that number, imagine all the children.

Refugees protested their bad conditions. They begged the international community to help them! Unfortunately, the police attacked women and children with tear gas: children and pregnant and vulnerable women were sent for their wounds to clinics that were, of course, not enough to help!

I want you to understand that dozens of small toddlers were tear-gassed by Greek police.

In addition to the bad conditions created by the Asylum Organization in Moria, the weather on the island was also very cold in winter and very hot in summer, and every year people died because of the extreme cold! There is no electricity in Moria camp; people live in tents; the food given is rotten and not edible at all, and even if it were, it is not enough!

In addition to the police, the number of racists has also increased: from the harassing of migrants on the beach to various cyber routes. They have brutally attacked migrants.

Unfortunately, the situation on the island is not stable for even a week. Fascists attacked refugees in street and roads, in broad daylight. They attacked humanitarian and non-governmental organizations (many who left the island because they were attacked by racists). Schools were closed, social centers were closed, and the insecurity of the island increased. At that time (February 2020), Moria was like Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan! It was even more dangerous than the insecure atmosphere of the war zone!

The people who were living in the camp come from many different parts of world: Africa, Asia, the Middle East, with different cultures and languages. Imagine keeping thousands of refugees in the camp, and what will happen then! Of course, people will lose their hope. Of course, this will create many conflicts among each other... But they were still living and hoping for bright days. And once again, children became even more vulnerable, they saw many conflicts between their parents in front of their eyes, they saw a child who dies in an accident while playing in the street, in the hell of Moria. Many teenagers are addicted to all kinds of drugs, they experience a life in Moria, while their parents live thousands of kilometers away. The great powers are just spectators and look at them as tools for their political games!

Many teenagers in that camp have mental health problems, many have committed suicide. These teenagers, if you had the time to spend with them, you would understand. They deserve a bright future. Such children left their country, their families because of endless wars, as in Afghanistan, and hoped for a peaceful and bright future in Europe. These did not think Europe could be scarier and more insecure than their own country...

In fact, we are all refugees in this world! But still, we cannot see children playing a role in this political game. They should be at school and have a calm and safe environment to live in...

### **Moria camp, day of Corona**

After the start of lock-down, 15 September 2020, everything got worse and scarier for the refugees living in this hell because of the first positive case in the Moria camp!

There were families who had taken up residence and had to flee the camp, there were families who had been denied UN assistance due to a negative asylum decision. They had children and were reconciled to living there, even in the terrible conditions of the camp. How could they care about personal hygiene and prevention measures against the Corona virus? How in a place where you have to be in line for the basic needs, food, asylum papers? How when toilets and showers are never cleaned and always in despicable condition?

According to the new positive case in Moria, social distancing, actually, was a joke. Moria camp was in quarantine for 14 days. It was even harder than before, there were not enough basic goods to continue living in Moria. Newborns needed powder milk, diapers. Some people needed essential medicines, but clinics only accepted corona emergencies! Another joke! How could 20,000 people be supported with just two small non-governmental clinics!

At this very moment, the UN reduced the subsidy cash for refugees from 90 euros to 75 euros monthly. And the quality of the food did not change, it got even worse. Other children wanted to eat ice cream or chocolate with their friends, play, wanted to learn, be heard! Moria immigrants also began demonstrating to call on the world community, to testify that the situation in Moria camp was terrible, that they too are men, women, children, teenagers, but living on this lost island...In the hope of the awakening of the world powers, those who carry only the drums of peace and humanity!

### **A typical Saturday in lockdown at Moria with children, July 18, 2020**

With the severe outbreak of the Corona virus, the whole world fell silent. It was certainly very difficult for all the people of the world to stay at home, something that many people could hardly imagine. Meanwhile, all the educational and entertainment activities of children were closed in the camp. No educational organization was allowed to do anything. Of course, children living in the city could attend online classes or go out for a nature walk, or to a park with their family or friends for an hour. But inside the camp, people had to accept another, even harsher prison.

The children spent hours with garbage and nothing else! There were more restrictions for the girls because the camp conditions were more dangerous for them. But despite these conditions, some refugees started self-organized activities for children.

The number of children in this activity – which was held at the back of the camp in the forest – sometimes reached 300 kids. The classes were limited and held in the intense heat under a cheap tent. But the children’s motivation, enthusiasm and energy increased week by week. There were teenagers who, aspiring to be teachers for the younger children, volunteered to help. They were 15, 16, 17 years old! They tried to give younger children energy, play with them for at least an hour, something they needed as well: peace, education, and equality! Moria had now become like the eternal home of many children. They have left their country for a place of peace and now they are stuck on an island! Many younger kids when they see a bus coming from the city they just call: “Take us, take us!” For many of them life was even worse and more painful than before! Many of them no longer have meaning in life, those who were among the most hopeful people in their former lives!

Innocent children of this forgotten island are exposed to severe psychological damage! Children must be children, not slaves! In the hope of peace.



Painting by Al-Amin Albadra

# LIFE DREAM

by Jacky

My life dream is to become a nurse, I like helping adults. Or to become a woman with a store, a clothing store for women, like Zara. I like jackets, cropped pants, shoes with heels and small bags. I like colors that are a bit striking, like pink, yellow, gray and black. Or to help women victims like me, with advice, encouragement. For example, I can share my experiences with them.

And for my son I have a dream for him that he can become a pilot. I love planes, they are something rare. Or a doctor, to save people's lives. For my son, I dress him with pants and jackets in winter. I want to suggest to him, when he grows up, he can choose his life. I'm going to talk to him about it starting when he's eight. I'm not going to force anything. I will get advice from my colleagues. These are my dreams for the future.

# RÊVE DE VIE

par Jacky

Mon rêve de vie c'est de devenir une infirmière, j'aime aider les grandes personnes. Ou bien devenir une femme avec un magasin, une boutique d'habillement pour femmes, comme Zara. J'aime les vestos, pantalons coupés, des chaussures avec talons et des petits sacs. J'aime les couleurs un peu frappantes, comme le rose, jaune, gris et noir. Ou aider les femmes victimes comme moi, avec des conseils, des encouragements. Par exemple, je peux partager avec eux mes expériences.

Et pour mon fils j'ai un rêve pour lui qu'il peut devenir un pilote. J'adore les avions, c'est quelque chose de rare. Ou bien un docteur, pour sauver la vie des gens. Pour mon fils, je l'habille avec des pantalons et des jackets en hiver. Je veux lui proposer quand il va grandir, il peut choisir sa vie. Je vais lui parler à partir de huit ans. Je ne vais pas le forcer. Je vais me renseigner avec mes collègues. C'est ça mes rêves de la future.

# MY WISH

by JK

I am Congolese, I am from the Province of Kasai-Occidental, back home in Kananga, this is where I grew up, I was born there, I grew up there. And I experienced a lot of things over there back home, there are serious things that happened back home there in 2016. And I have a lot of memories from back home, for the orphaned children, the orphans, with the old women, because a lot of things happened over there with us. I will explain a bit, as I left home, it's also been five years since I left home in my country, and I wanted one day, if god blesses me, I want to do something for the children and the orphans, and many things for the old ladies, and the old grandmothers back there who have been left behind. That's my wish, one day if god blesses me, I want to do something to help them with ideas, with encouragement. That's my wish.

# MON SOUHAIT

par JK

Je suis Congolaise, je suis de la Province du Kasai-Occidental, chez nous à Kananga, c'est là où j'ai grandi, je suis née là-bas, j'ai grandi là-bas. Et j'ai vécu beaucoup de choses là-bas chez nous, il y a des choses graves qui se sont passés chez nous là-bas en 2016. Et j'ai beaucoup de souvenirs de chez nous, pour les enfants orphelins, les orphelines, avec les vieilles femmes, par ce qu'il s'est passé beaucoup de choses là-bas chez nous. Je vais expliquer un peu, comme j'ai quitté chez nous, ça fait aussi cinq ans que j'ai quitté chez nous dans mon pays, et je voulais un jour, si dieux me bénit, je veux faire quelque chose pour les enfants et les orphelines et beaucoup de choses pour les vieilles dames, et les vieilles grand-mères là-bas qui sont restées là-bas. C'est ça mon souhait, un jour si dieux me bénit, je veux faire quelque chose pour les aider avec les idées, avec les encouragements. C'est ça mon souhait.

## WHAT IF IT WAS YOU?

by Lilyane

Why you and not someone else? Because maybe you are the person who made me laugh right after seeing me cry. Because you are the kind of person who makes me smile all day long and made me forget my past and gave me the desire to move forward. I know I will miss you if you leave.

## YOU MUST MOVE ON

by Lilyane

Life is not easy – you will experience blows and obstacles that you do not even imagine. What is important in all fights is to stay standing. Life belongs to courage, do not weaken yourself because of the difficulties you encounter in the path of life, life is made of fights, redeem them, and stay standing.

## ET SI C'ETAIT TOI ?

par Lilyane

Pour quoi toi et pas quelqu'un d'autre ? Par ce que peut être tu es la personne à m'avoir fait rire juste après m'avoir vu pleurer. Parce que tu es le genre de personne qui me fais sourire à la longueur des jours, et m'a fait oublier mon passé et m'a donné l'envie d'avancer. Je sais que tu vas me manquer si tu pars.

## TU DOIS AVANCER

par Lilyane

La vie n'est pas facile, tu auras des coups, des obstacles que tu n'imagines même pas. Ce qui est important dans tous les combats c'est de rester debout.

La vie appartient au courage, ne t'affaiblis pas à cause des difficultés que tu rencontres dans le chemin de la vie, la vie est faite de combats, encaisses et restes debout.

# THE ORPHANS

by Marcelle

I would like to speak of the orphans since I am one.

Orphans are the children who are often very mistreated in Africa since they have no one to protect them, they don't go to school.

They are not given anything to eat.

The people who raise them mistreat them, oblige them to prostitute themselves to bring back food and many other things that I cannot name.

My Dream is to work hard to be able to come to the aid of orphans and to give them the chance to study and to succeed in life.

So that they are not always sad give them a taste for life and a better future.

# LES ORPHELINS

par Marcelle

Je veux parler des orphelins puisque je suis une.

Les orphelins sont les enfants qui sont souvent très maltraités en Afrique comme ils ont personnes pour les protéger, ils ne vont pas à l'école.

On ne leur donne pas à manger.

Les personnes qui les élèvent les maltraitent, les oblige à se prostituer pour ramener la nourriture et plein d'autres choses que je ne saurai citer.

Mon Rêve est de travailler dure pour pouvoir venir en aide aux orphelins et leur donnais la chance d'étudier et de réussir dans la vie.

Pour qu'ils ne soient pas toujours tristes leur donner le gout à la vie et un avenir meilleur.

# DREAMS

by Mimi Translated from Lingala to English by Charlene Mbombi

I greet you all, my name is Mimi. I want to say something, I have so much stress. I want to have peace of mind. I want to have a stable life. I want to have a family. I want to have peace. I want to have my own house. A house on my own. To start working. To study, to go back to school if it's possible. To catch up with my life.

I didn't learn much.

I struggled to speak French. I'm missing my family a lot. I wish to get back in contact with them. I want to have peace of mind. I have so much stress. I want to have peace of mind. To feel safe. I want to have a house, a home where I feel safe. I go to work. I go to school and come back in my house, knowing that is my house. It will make me very happy. I have so many dreams. So much hope in my life. I wish someday to have a bank account. Working, having a house, a peaceful home with a family, where I feel very very safe and stable. I want to have a stable life, without the stress, without thinking, without worrying. Having a normal life like every human being, every morning, every day, taking a shower, going to work, coming back, if it's possible to get married someday, to have children. I want a better life. I have so much to say but I cannot express myself.

I really want to get rid of all the stress, all the bad memories in my mind. Every time, sometimes I don't feel well, I get healed, I get back to being sick again.

This is not a good life.

I want to have a stable life. I want to get away, get rid of stress. And my biggest wish is someday to meet my family. I'm the mother of two children. They are in Congo, but it is long that I didn't get in contact with them.

I really want to find out what is happening with them. I want to meet them again. My family, my children, I want to get a hold of them, I want to have peace. I want to have peace. I want to be in a place where I'll be stable, where I'll be calm, so I can focus on my dreams. I have so many good dreams, so I want to have a stable life, so I can focus on my dreams, go back to school, start working, it will give me peace. I want to feel safe. This is what I wanted to say. Thank you.



# RÊVES

par Mimi

Je vous salue tous, je m'appelle Mimi. Je veux dire quelque chose, j'ai tellement de stress. Je veux avoir l'esprit tranquille. Je veux avoir une vie stable. Je veux avoir une famille. Je veux avoir la paix. Je veux avoir ma propre maison. Une maison à moi toute seule. Pour commencer à travailler. Pour étudier, retourner à l'école, si c'est possible. Pour retrouver ma vie.

Je n'ai pas beaucoup appris.

J'ai eu du mal à parler français. Ma famille me manque beaucoup. Je souhaite reprendre contact avec eux. Je veux avoir l'esprit tranquille. J'ai tellement de stress. Je veux avoir l'esprit tranquille. Pour me sentir en sécurité. Je veux posséder une maison, un endroit pour moi, où je me sens en sécurité. Je vais au travail. Je vais à l'école et je rentre chez moi, sachant que c'est ma maison. Cela me rendra très heureuse. J'ai tellement de rêves. Tellement d'espoir dans ma vie. Je souhaite un jour avoir un compte bancaire. Travailler, avoir une maison, un endroit pour moi, paisible avec une famille, où je me sens très très en sécurité et stable. Je veux avoir une vie stable, sans stress, sans réfléchir, sans m'inquiéter. Avoir une vie normale comme tout être humain, chaque matin, chaque jour, prendre une douche, aller travailler, revenir, si c'est possible de se marier un jour, d'avoir des enfants. Je veux une vie meilleure. J'ai tellement de choses à dire mais je ne peux pas m'exprimer. Je veux vraiment me débarrasser de tout le stress, de tous les mauvais souvenirs dans ma tête. A chaque fois, parfois je ne me sens pas bien, je guéris, je redeviens malade.

Ce n'est pas une bonne vie. Je veux avoir une vie stable.

Je veux m'évader, me débarrasser du stress. Et mon plus grand souhait est un jour de rencontrer ma famille. Je suis mère de deux enfants. Ils sont au Congo, mais cela fait longtemps que je ne suis pas entrée en contact avec eux.

Je veux vraiment savoir ce qui se passe avec eux. Je veux les rencontrer à nouveau. Ma famille, mes enfants, je veux les retrouver, je veux avoir la paix. Je veux avoir la paix. Je veux être dans un endroit où je serai stable, où je serai calme, pour pouvoir me concentrer sur mes rêves. J'ai tellement de beaux rêves, donc je veux avoir une vie stable, pour pouvoir me concentrer sur mes rêves, retourner à l'école, commencer à travailler, ça me donnera la paix. Je veux me sentir en sécurité. C'est ce que je voulais dire. Merci.



# YOU ARE PART OF MY LIFE

by Naomie

You are part of my life, you are for me like the stars of the sky, I know that during the day I won't see you, but you are always there, and you will seem like the stars that appear all night, the extension of the blue sky to light it up and make it beautiful. Even if you go to the other side of the earth and my eyes cannot see you, know that you will always be so near to my heart.

True friendship is not inseparable, but is always present to the other, even when life decides to separate us physically. I had such a hard time finding you, I'm going to have a hard time losing you. A river may disappear, the sun may grow old, but our friendship cannot be broken. I don't need to have many friends, you are worth more than ten thousand friends, you alone fill the void in my heart. You are the person who turns my storm into a rainbow, thanks to you my moments of sadness become moments of joy and my moments of joy become moments of happiness. We did not choose our family, but for me you are a sister whom I had the opportunity to choose.

When I stumble and slip up, when I find it difficult to go on because of a bad time in my life, you become my staff that allows me comfort and you give me hope and encourage me to win the fight against my life. You can give me all the money in the world, but you gave me the real gift: you shared your time with me, time, the most precious thing in life. We will return to our destiny no matter how long it takes. In the face of the earth's magnitude, we are so infinite, but when I am with you, I have a joy greater than the size of the moon. Let me tell you that you are my invaluable treasure.



# VOUS FAITES PARTIE DE MA VIE

par Naomie

Vous faites partie de ma vie, vous êtes pour moi comme les étoiles du ciel, je sais que pendant le jour je ne te verrai pas mais vous êtes toujours là et vous semblerez comme les étoiles qui apparaissent toute la nuit, l'extension du ciel bleu pour l'éclairer et le rendre beau. Même si vous allez à l'autre côté de la terre et mes yeux ne peuvent pas vous voir, savez que vous serez toujours si proche de mon cœur.

La vraie amitié n'est pas inséparable, mais est toujours présente à l'autre, même quand la vie décide de nous séparer physiquement. J'avais tellement de difficulté à vous trouver, je vais avoir de la difficulté à vous perdre. Une rivière peut disparaître, le soleil peut vieillir, mais notre amitié ne peut pas être brisée. Je n'ai pas besoin d'avoir beaucoup d'amis, vous valez plus de dix mille amis, vous, seule, remplissez le vide de mon cœur. Vous êtes la personne qui transforme ma tempête en arc-en-ciel, grâce à vous mes moments de tristesse deviennent des moments de joie et mes moments de joie deviennent des moments de bonheur. Nous n'avons pas choisi notre famille, mais pour moi, vous êtes une sœur que j'ai eu l'occasion de choisir.

Quand je trébuche et décape, quand je trouve difficile de passer à cause du mauvais moment de la vie, vous devenez mon bâton qui me permet confort et vous me donnez l'espoir et m'encourage à gagner la lutte contre ma vie. Vous pouvez me donner tout l'argent dans le monde, mais vous m'avez donné le vrai cadeau : vous avez partagé votre temps avec moi, le temps, la chose la plus précieuse dans la vie. Nous reviendrions à notre destin, peu importe combien de temps nous allons prendre. Face à la grandeur de la terre, nous sommes si infinis, mais quand je suis avec vous j'ai une joie supérieure à la taille de la lune. Laissez-moi vous dire que vous êtes mon trésor inestimable.

# IN A MIRROR

by Naomie

In my quest to find the house of happiness, I met a girl with an innocent look who cried, her tears were red.

I asked her, why are you crying, young girl?

She replied that if she is sad and she cries it is because her favorite tree, which once was full of magnificent fruits and breathed joy, had lost all its fruits, and that it is loneliness which transformed the color of her tears.

She told me that she had just been through a sea of sorrow and that the darkness of the forest was her home, the daylight was foreign to her, and happy words were not in her dictionary.

Lost in the storm of fear and uncertainty her only shelter was in her thoughts.

I then said to her:

joy and sorrow are two sides of a coin, if you are in sorrow, joy is not far away.

I added: no journey is long once you arrive at the destination, and perseverance is the father of success.

From a distance she showed me a vast expanse of water and said to me:  
you see this troubled water, this infinite sea shelters my tears and my crying,  
in search of my share of happiness I swam in a river of despair and fought a fight  
that was lost in advance, I will not be able to come out victorious.

I looked at her and said to her again:

my sweet, don't fill the vessel of your heart with despair and fear, don't let yourself be won over by worries,

don't look at the long path you still have left to travel but look at the difficult path you have already travelled,

look at the ocean of suffering you have traveled to get all the way here,

look at the vast forest of deceptions you have overcome filled with rats and harmful insects,

how many times did the earth almost swallow you?

how many times has happiness denied you?

Always do your best to keep your smile, that's what can never be taken away from you.

The sweet and tender girl, sad, answers me saying:

I cry in this garden since life no longer has anything good to offer me,

I'm looking to flee my present, that's why I still take shelter in this empty garden next to

my tree which no longer has any fruit, fortunately it can still make me shade to be protected from the rays of the sun.

Yes, I cry, I cry tears of blood.

My tree which was once full of delicious fruits and filled my garden with life and happiness

has lost its worth due to the cruelty of humanity, now I am alone.

I look at the sad girl and say to her again:  
don't cry, young girl, tears are bitter and salty, but the smile is sweet.  
I added,  
peace is found in silence, and success in perseverance,  
you are a diamond, despite your flaws you will always be more valuable than  
a perfect stone,  
if until now the night has never smiled on you, wait, the day will smile on you,  
no suffering will be painful once you have met happiness,  
no journey will seem long once you reach your destination.

As long as you live all is not lost because I am the last fruit of your tree and my  
name is hope, if you tear me from the tree and throw me on the ground, I will fill  
your garden with lots of beautiful trees filled with delicious fruit—but to benefit  
from this happiness you must have patience. After this declaration, I watched at  
the window and saw that the night was leaving to give way to a new day. In front  
of my mirror, I flashed a smile of joy and happiness, and I said this last word to my  
reflection: life is beautiful.



# DANS UN MIROIR

par Naomie

Dans ma quête de trouver la maison du bonheur, j'ai rencontré une fille ayant un regard innocent qui pleurer, ses larmes étaient rouges.

Je lui ai demandé, pourquoi pleures-tu, jeune fille ?

Elle m'a répondu que si elle est triste et qu'elle pleure c'est par ce que son arbre préféré, qui jadis était rempli de magnifique fruits et respirait la joie, avait perdu tous ses fruits, et que c'est la solitude qui a transformé la couleur de ses larmes. Elle m'a dit qu'elle vient de traverser une mer de chagrin et que l'obscurité de la forêt était son demeure, la lumière du jour était étrangère pour elle, et les mots contents n'étais pas dans son dictionnaire.

Perdu dans la tempête de la peur et de l'incertitude son seul abri était dans ses pensées.

Je lui ai dit alors :

la joie et le chagrin sont les deux faces d'une pièce, si tu es dans le chagrin la joie n'est pas très loin.

J'ai ajouté: aucun voyage n'est long une fois qu'on arrive à la destination, et la persévérance est le père de la réussite.

De loin elle m'a montré une vaste étendue d'eau et m'a dit:

tu vois cette eau trouble, cette mer infinie abrite mes larmes et mes pleurs, en quête de ma part du bonheur j'ai nagé dans une rivière de désespoir et livré un combat qui était perdu d'avance, je ne saurai m'en sortir victorieuse.

Je l'ai regardé et lui a dit encore :

ma douce, ne remplis pas le vase de ton cœur avec le désespoir et la crainte, ne te laisses pas gagner par les inquiétudes,

ne regardes pas le long chemin qui te reste à parcourir mais regarde le chemin difficile que tu as déjà parcouru,

regardes l'océan de souffrance que tu as parcouru pour arriver jusque-là, regardes la vaste forêt de déceptions que tu as surmonté remplie de rats et d'insectes nuisibles,

combien de fois la terre a failli t'avaler ?

combien de fois le bonheur t'a renié ?

Fais toujours de ton mieux pour garder ton sourire, c'est ce qu'on ne pourra jamais te ravir.

La douce et tendre fille, triste, me répond en disant :

je pleure dans ce jardin puisse que la vie n'a plus rien de bon à me proposer,

je cherche à fuir mon présent, c'est pour ça que je m'abrite encore dans ce jardin vide à côté de mon arbre qui n'a plus aucun fruit, heureusement que ça peut encore me faire de l'ombre pour être préservée des rayons du soleil.

Oui je pleure, je pleure les larmes de sang.

Mon arbre qui jadis était rempli de fruits délicieux et remplissait mon jardin de vie et de bonheur a perdu sa valeur à cause de la méchanceté de l'humanité, maintenant je suis seule.



Je regarde la fille triste et lui dit encore:  
ne pleures pas, jeune fille, les larmes sont amères et salées, mais le sourire  
est sucré.

J'ai ajouté,  
la paix se trouve dans le silence, et la réussite dans la persévérance,  
t'es un **diamant**, malgré tes défauts t'auras toujours plus de valeur qu'une  
pierre parfaite,  
si jusqu'à présent la nuit ne t'a jamais souri, attend, le jour te sourira, aucune  
souffrance ne te sera pénible une fois que tu auras rencontré le bonheur,  
aucun voyage ne t'apparaîtra long une fois que tu auras atteint ta destination.

Tant que tu vis tout n'est pas perdu car je suis le dernier fruit de ton arbre et je  
m'appelle espoir, si tu m'arraches de l'arbre et tu me jettes sur terre je remplirai  
ton jardin de pleins de bels arbres remplis de fruit délicieux-mais pour bénéficier  
de ce bonheur il te faut avoir de la **patience**.

Après cette déclaration, j'ai guetté à la fenêtre et j'ai vu que la nuit partait pour  
laisser place à une nouvelle journée. Devant mon miroir j'ai flashé un sourire de  
joie et de bonheur et j'ai dit cette dernière parole à mon reflet : la vie est belle.

# THE STRANGER

by Nasrin Soltani Translated from Farsi by Parastou Hassouri

**The seed:** “Why is this place so dark and damp and scary? Why is there no one here? You mean to tell me I’m all alone? That there is no one here I can talk to? It’s so sad, so difficult that there is no one here to even tell me what this place is, to ask me, who are you and what do you want to do? But no, I don’t think that I am here for nothing, there must be a reason and I have to find that reason.

**After some time.**

**The plant:** “Oh hey, who are you?”

**The fish:** “Me? Hehe, everyone knows me, I’m the fish. Who are you?”

**The plant:** “I don’t know who I am because there’s no one here to tell me who I am.”

The fish laughs and says, “Well, it’s not necessary for someone to tell you who you are. You were probably a seed once and you’ll transform one day into a plant or flower.”

**The plant:** “But I don’t know what my name is. See, you’re a fish, but what about me?”

**The fish:** “So let me pick a name for you. I’ll name you ‘Stranger.’ Is that all right? Do you like it?”

**The plant:** “Well, I suppose it’s better than being without a name or identity. By the way, Fish, what’s up there and what’s going on above the water?”

You know, I’d really like to grow fast and get up there to see what’s going on.” The fish, laughing: “You, a small plant living under a swamp this big think you can grow so you can get up there? You’re not strong enough, and you’re not worthy ... You didn’t even have a name until I picked one for you, so please don’t wish for the impossible, it is not for you to weave dreams.”

**The plant:** “But....

The fish didn’t let the stranger finish talking. He left indifferently and after that day, the stranger had no hope. She thought that she was powerless and insignificant, useless, even, and thought to herself, if she were a worthy plant, why would she be growing under this dark and dirty swamp? So, she said to herself, this must be my place.

Some time passed and the stranger grew each day, and everyone passed by her indifferently, and some even bumped into her, and mocked her. She had no hope for the future and no wish to rise and felt that all she deserved was that dark and ugly place... Until one day something happened. The stranger, like every day, was just hopelessly staring into space, when she noticed a small seed making a lot of effort to emerge from under all that mud and muck. It struck her as interesting that such a small seed could have so much strength while she didn’t. She told herself, I can do it too. And from that day, she decided that with all her strength, she would continue to grow. She would close her eyes so she could be blind to the indifference. She would cover her ears so that she would be deaf to the ugly and defeating words. She closed her mouth so that no one could hear her sighs.



She covered her wounds, and she swallowed her pain and continued to grow with strength. She told herself, "One day, I will be the most beautiful flower in the world, and everyone will say my name and take pride in me, they will embrace me and love me, without pity, and everyone will praise my strength and call me the greatest flower in the world."

After some time, finally, this stranger emerged from under all that mud and muck, that frightening dark place where she had experienced all that pain and suffering, and she blossomed on the water's surface, in a place where the sun shone on her and her reflection doubled the light, and everyone was astonished by such a creation. She now has a beautiful name, Lotus, which inspires everyone. All over the world they remember her and she is no one other than the symbol of a woman who, for years, has been fighting to reach these dreams she has yet to achieve, fight to be seen, to be accepted, to attain her rights, to blossom, so that she can be equal, so that aside from being a mother or a wife, she can be a woman, choose her own path in life and this is the dream of all women. Despite facing, at every stage of her life, hurdles, she overcame them and from each of her wounds, a blossom bloomed, like so many women in the world, a symbol of eternity, inspiration, light, power, and beauty.



Drawing by Nasrin Soltani

### غریبه

دانه: چقدر اینجا تاریک و نمناک و ترسناکه چرا هیچ کس نیست؟ یعنی من تنهام؟ یعنی کسی نیست که من باهاش صحبت کنم؟ چقدر غم انگیز و سخته که هیچ کسی نیست حتی بگه اینجا کجاست، کی هستی و چی کار میخوای بکنی اما نه فک نکنم من اینجا باشم برای هیچی، حتماً یه دلیلی وجود داره من باید اون دلیل و پیدا کنم.

بعد از چند مدت

گیاه: ”هی سلام تو کی هستی -؟“

- ”من! هه هه هه منو همه میشناسن من ماهی هستم دیگه، تو کی هستی؟“

- ”من؟! من نمیدونم اخه هیشکی نیست بهم بگه من کی هستم.“

ماهی لازم نیست کسی بگه تو کی هستی احتمالاً تو هم یه دانه بودی و یه روز یه گلی یا گیاه میشی دیگه.“

گیاه:

خوب من نمیدونم اسمم چی هست ببین تو اسمت ماهی من چی؟“

ماهی:

خوب بزار من یه اسم برات انتخاب کنم اسمتو میزارم غریبه خوبه؟ دوشش داری؟“

گیاه:

خوب از بی اسم بدون بهتره. راستی ماهی اون بالا کجاست و چه خبره اونجا؟ میدونی خیلی دوس دارم زود بزرگ بشم برم اون بالا ببینم اونجا چه خبره؟



Painting by Al-Amin Albadra

درخشش را دو چندان میکرد و همه از افرینشش در حیرت بودن. حالا او یک نام زیبا دارد نیلوفر ابی که الهام بخش همه هست همه از او در سراسر دنیا یاد میکنند و او کسی نیست جز نماد یک زن زنی که سال هاست میجنگد تا به ارزوهای دست نیافته اش برسد تا دیده شود تا قبولش کنند تا حقش را بگیرد تا شکوفا شود تا برابر باشد جز مادر بودن جز همسر بودن زن باشد و بتواند خود انتخاب کند راه زندگیش را این است رویای من رویای همه ما زن ها. با اینکه در تمام مراحل زندگیش موانع زیادی بود همه را شکست و عبور کرد و از هر زخمش شکوفه ای شکفت همانند من همانند همه زن های دنیا نمادی از جاودانگی ، الهام بخش نور و قدرت ، شکوفایی و زیبایی

ماهی: خندید ... تو یه گیاه کوچیک تو این مرداب به این بزرگی میخوای رشد کنی بری اون بالا؟! تو نه قدرتش و داری نه لیاقتش و بین تو حتی اسم نداشتی من برات انتخاب کردم پس لطفا ارزوهای نکن که محال باشه رویا بافی مال تو نیست.

گیاه: اَخه ...

ماهی نداشت حرف غریبه تموم بشه. با بی اعتنایی رفت بعد از اون روز غریبه هیچ امیدی نداشت همیشه فک میکرد ناتوان و بی اهمیت هست و حتی بی فایده با خود فک میکرد اگر گیاه مفیدی بود چرا باید در زیر این مرداب کثیف و تاریک رشد کند پس با خود گفت جایگاه من همینجاست. مدت ها گذشت و غریبه هر روز رشد میکرد و همه از کنارش با بی اعتنایی عبور میکردن و حتی مورد آزار و تمسخر قرارش میدادند و او هیچ امیدی به آینده نداشت و حتی هیچ ارزوی برای رسیدن و لیاقتش را همان جای تاریک و زشت میدانست تا اینکه یک روز اتفاقی افتاد. غریبه که مثل همیشه نامیدانه به یک گوشه خیره شده بود دید دانه ای کوچک با تلاش زیاد میخواهد از زیر ان همه گل و لای بیاید بیرون براش جالب بود چطور یک دانه به این کوچکی میتواند اینقد نیرو داشته باشد و من نه؟! با خود گفت من هم میتوانم. و از ان روز تصمیم گرفت با تمام قدرت به رشتش ادامه دهد چشم هایش را بست تا نبیند بی اعتنایی ها را گوش هایش را بست تا نشنود حرف های زشت و نا امید کننده را دهانش را بست تا صدای ناله هایش را کسی نشنود زخم هایش را پوشاند و دردهایش را قورت داد و با قدرت رشد کرد و با خود گفت یک روز من زیبا ترین گل دنیا میشوم که همه اسم من را به زبانشان می اورند همه به من افتخار میکنند همه مرا در اغوش میکشند و عاشقانه دوستم میدارند بدون ترحم و همه قدرتم را تحسین میکنند و مرا بزرگترین گل دنیا خطاب میکنند. و بعد از مدت ها .... بلاخره این غریبه از زیر ان گل و لای از ان جای وحشتناک و تاریک با همه درد رنج که داشت شکفت و بر روی اب نمایان شد جایی که خورشید بر او میتابید و

# I WANT TO GO HOME

by Razan

Another cold day and it's very far away from my home.

Every single day, I keep thinking about that very bad day, it happened in the moment I left my parents, siblings, friends, memories, and my bed behind the oceans in that home, it's very far away.

You know, when I talked to my home before I left, first I promised that I would be back soon, just please be safe, warm, and don't let the strangers enter you! I felt the wall talk to me and say: "Where are you going?! We will miss you and I will be scared without you!" I heard but didn't turn around.

Since that day I'm seeing the same dream that I came back and arrived but couldn't enter you! I know you're mad at me, but it's just...I want to go back home!

Another cold day and it's very far away, that is my feeling when I remember that day!

I had to take that decision to leave you, but I wanted the safety and security for my family! Why do you keep coming in my sleep, and my dreams?! Don't you know that you are very far away?! You don't know what happened that day!

When we rode in the car, it was a very nice and sunny day in our town, but all the way I kept crying and didn't even see in front of me because of my tears. I was holding my three kids on my lap, Sham my fourth kid wasn't born yet, I just wanted to run away from the bombs and weapons and, yes, I didn't turn around because I didn't want to get weak and go back.

But now another cold day! And I miss that house far away!! Why do you keep coming in my sleep?!

I can't forget every single thing that happened that day, I'm keeping every detail here inside me, and never will throw it away. It was a very long way to get to Lebanon, then to Egypt, to Jordan then to Spain. America was our final trip, it's not easy for me! But are you still coming in my sleep?! Just please go away!

But I really want to go home, but that's very long, dark, and far way.

I still remember what my mom told me from nine years ago that day, she said: "Razan, take care, I might never see you again, please take care, honey!" My father held Mohammad, my little son, and said: "May Allah protect you, my baby!"

Don't you think it's very hard on my heart?! And you still punish me and come in my dreams. I can't enter there.

I just want to go home.

You know, I changed from many, many houses since I left you, and in each one I was looking for rest, quiet, and happiness, but I couldn't find them until now.

Listen, by the way I never loved you or liked to live in you, you were a small, dark, bad place, but...But full of rest, quiet and happiness, that I can't find anywhere.

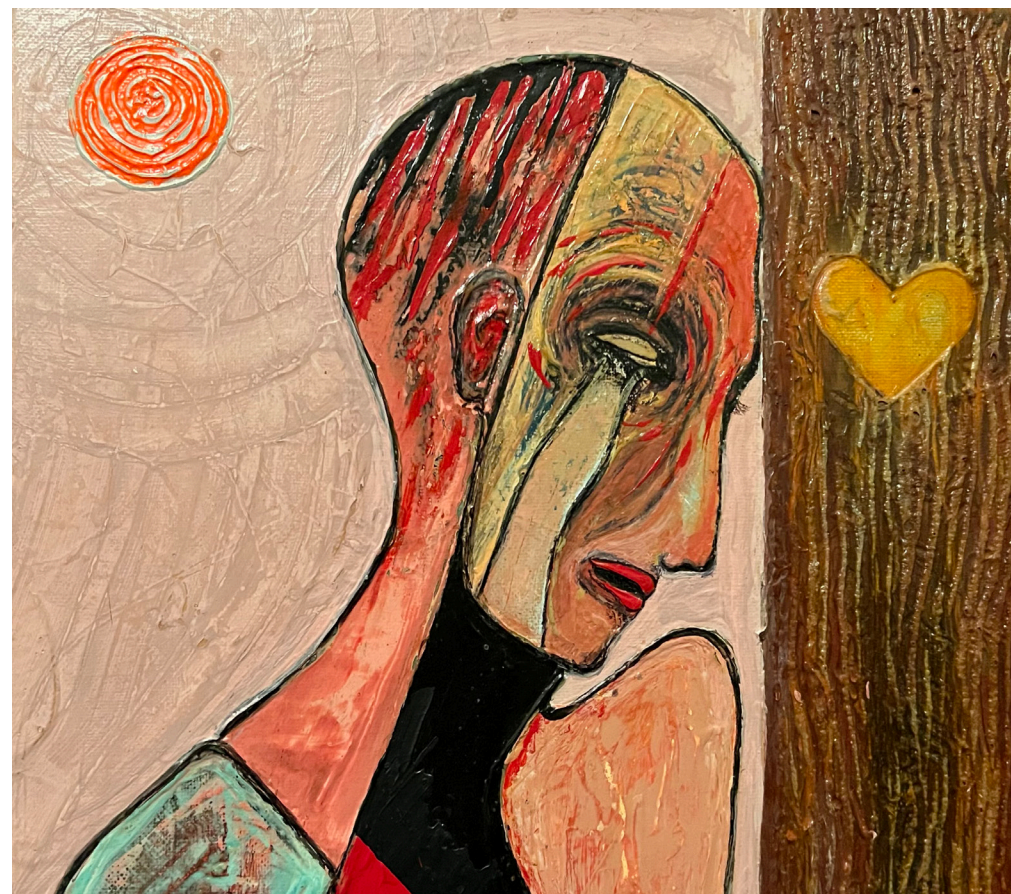
That's why I'm still moving from place to place, I'm looking for YOU! But you are so far away!

Never mind, I'm good, I'm fine, and having a good time, here in my new country, a lot of smiling around me. I'm so grateful and blessed that I succeeded in gathering my family: husband and kids and didn't lose them in that stupid war.

I'm building myself, fighting my fears, it's okay to be with a lot of tears, but I never will give up, even if you come every day in my dreams and you are mad at me, sometimes that causes the weakness for me, and I cannot stop crying that night, but it's okay with a few tears, at least I can see you in my dreams. Yes, I want to keep seeing you.

Please keep coming in my dreams, but don't forget, please stay safe, warm and don't let the strangers enter you!

Letter to my house in Syria.



Painting by Al-Amin Albadra

# I WANT TO GO HOME

by Razan

والآن يوم بارد آخر!

؟وأنا أفتقدُ هذا المنزل البعيد!! لماذا تبقى تأتي في نومي باستمرار!

لا أستطيع أن أنسى كل شيء حدث في ذلك اليوم، فأنا أحتفظ بكل التفاصيل هنا بداخلي، ولن أتخلص منها أبداً. لقد كان طريقاً طويلاً

جداً للوصول إلى لبنان، ثم مصر، ثم إلى الأردن، ثم إلى إسبانيا. كانت أمريكا رحلتنا الأخيرة، لم يكن الأمر سهلاً بالنسبة لي! وهل

ما زلت انت تأتي في منامي؟! فقط من فضلك اذهب بعيداً!

لكنني أريدُ حقاً العودة إلى المنزل، ولكن هذا طريق طويل ومظلم وبعيد جداً.

ما زلت أتذكر ما قالته لي أُمي منذ تسع سنوات في ذلك اليوم، قالت: ”رزان، اعطني بنفسك، قد لا أراك مرة أخرى، من فضلك اعطني ”! بنفسك!“ حمل والدي محمد، ابني الصغير، وقال: ”الله يحفظك يا طفلي.

الا تعتقد أن هذا صعبٌ جداً على قلبي؟! وما زلت تعاقبني وتأتي في أحلامي. وأنا لا أستطيع الدخول هناك!. انا حقاً فقط اريد الذهاب للمنزل.

اتعلم؟ لقد غيرت العديد والعديد من المنازل منذ أن غادرتك، وفي كل منزل كنت أبحث عن الراحة والهدوء والسعادة، لكنني لم أجدها حتى الآن.

اسمع، بالمناسبة لم أحبك أبداً أو أحب أن أعيش فيك، كنتُ مكاناً صغيراً ومظلماً وسيئاً، لكن ... لكنك مليء بالراحة والهدوء والسعادة، لا أجدها في أي مكان

لذلك أنا ما زلت أنتقل من مكان إلى آخر، أنا أبحث عنك! لكن انت بعيد جداً!

لا تهتم، أنا بخير، وأقضي وقتاً ممتعاً، هنا في بلدي الجديد، الكثير من الابتسامة حولي. أنا ممتن ومبارك للغاية لأنني

بقلم رزان شلش.

يوم آخر وبارد، بعيداً جداً عن منزلي.

كل يوم يأتي، وأنا لا أزال أفكر في ذلك اليوم السيئ والموحش، الذي حدث في اللحظة التي تركت فيها والدي وإخوتي، أصدقائي

وذكرياتي، وسريري خلف المحيطات في ذلك المنزل، إنه بعيد جداً.

هل تدري، عندما تحدثت إلى منزلي قبل مغادرتي، وعدتُ أولاً أنني سأعود قريباً، فقط أرجوك كن آمناً ودافئاً، ولا تدع الغرباء

يدخلونك! شعرت بالجدار يتحدث إليّ ويقول: إلى أين أنت ذاهبة؟! سفتتقدك وسأكون خائفاً بدونك!

سمعته، ولكن لم أستدر

منذ ذلك اليوم، وأنا أرى نفس الحلم أيّ عدت ووصلت، ولكنني لم أتمكن من الدخول إليك! أعلم أنك غاضب عليّ، لكنني فقط... أريد

العودة إلى المنزل!

يوم بارد آخر وهو بعيد جداً، هذا هو شعوري عندما أتذكر ذلك اليوم!

اضطرت إلى اتخاذ هذا القرار لترتك، لكنني أردت الأمن والأمان لعائلتي! لماذا تأتيني في نومي وأحلامي؟! ألا تعلم أنك بعيد جداً؟

أنت لا تعرف ما حدث في ذلك اليوم!

عندما ركبنا السيارة، كان يوماً جميلاً ومشمساً في بلدتنا، لكن طوال الطريق ظللت أبكي ولم أر أمامي حتى بسبب دموعي. كنت قد

أمسكت بأطفالي الثلاثة في حضني، شام طفلي الرابع لم تكن مولودة بعد، أردت فقط الهروب من القنابل والأسلحة، ونعم، لم أستدير

لأنني لم أرغب في الضعف والعودة.



نجحت في جمع عائلتي: زوجي وأولادي ولم أفقدهم في تلك الحرب الغبية أنا أبني نفسي، أحارب مخاوفي، لا بأس أن تكون مع الكثير من الدموع، لكنني لن أستسلم أبدًا، حتى لو أتيت كل يوم في أحلامي وكنت غاضبًا مني، وأحيانًا يتسبب ذلك في الضعف بالنسبة لي، وأنا لا أستطيع التوقف عن البكاء في تلك الليلة، لكن لا بأس ببضع دموع، على الأقل أستطيع رؤيتك في أحلامي. نعم، أريد أن أواصل رؤيتك. من فضلك استمر في القدوم في أحلامي، لكن لا تنسى ، أرجوك ابق آمنًا ودافعًا ولا تدع الغرباء يدخلونك! رسالة إلى منزلي في سوريا.

## A DREAM OF THE FUTURE

by R.G.

My dream is to become a nurse so that I take good care of people.

It has always been my dream since my childhood to be a great nurse to take care of all kinds of people, poor or rich.

Next that I be a marvelous mother for my son.

## A DREAM

by Rosine

I would like to be a good mother for my daughter like my mother was. My dream is to see my daughter succeed. So that she becomes a great woman in society.

## UN RÊVE D'AVENIR

par R.G.

Mon rêve est de devenir une infirmière pour que je prenne bien soin des personnes.

C'est toujours mon rêve depuis mon enfance d'être une très grande infirmière, de soigner tous les genres de personnes, pauvres ou riches.

En suite que je sois une merveilleuse mère pour mon fils.

## UN RÊVE PAR ROSINE

par Rosine

J'aimerais être une bonne mère pour ma fille comme l'a été ma maman. Mon rêve c'est de voir ma fille réussir. Qu'elle devienne une grande femme dans la société. La vraie amitié n'est pas inséparable, mais est toujours présente à l'autre,



# ZAYA

by Thege Mungu

Zaya, during her dream, sees herself as an ordinary girl, not pretty or attractive, in whom no one can be interested. She sees herself plowing the land at the speed of a tractor, very impressive for a girl of her age. For this magnificent work, her uncle calls her behind the house, under a banana tree, and the uncle, cutting this banana tree on the spot, Zaya dies.

Then she appeared in another village further away as a slave who worked tirelessly. While working, she is recognized by a shopkeeper who lives in her home village. She introduces herself: "I am Zaya." The shopkeeper says to her: "You have been dead and buried for several years." She explains everything to this shopkeeper: that she has been sold by her uncle.

The shopkeeper brought the news to the village. Her parents and the people of the village came to look for her and they repaid the sum of the debt that she owed as a slave. When she returned to the family, she married and became the mother of four children. The village's interdiction was not to go see her grave. After several years she died. She had two graves in her name: one very young, and one of her old age.

# ZAYA

par Thege Mungu

Zaya, pendant son rêve, elle se voit une fille ordinaire, pas jolie ni attirante, a qui personne ne peut s'intéresser. Elle se voit labourer la terre à la vitesse d'un tracteur, très impressionnant pour une fille de son âge. Pour ce travail magnifique, son oncle l'appelle derrière la maison, sous un bananier, et l'oncle, coupant ce bananier sur place, Zaya meure.

En suite elle apparut dans un autre village plus loin, comme esclave qui travaille sans relâche. Pendant qu'elle travaille elle est reconnue par un commerçant qui habite son village d'origine. Elle se présente : « je suis Zaya. » Le commerçant lui dit : « tu es morte et enterrée depuis plusieurs années. » Elle explique tout à ce commerçant : qu'elle a été vendue par son oncle.

Le commerçant a apporté la nouvelle au village. Ses parents et les gens du village sont venus à sa recherche et ils ont remboursé la somme de la dette qui lui restait comme esclave. A son retour dans la famille, elle s'est mariée et devenue mère de quatre enfants. L'interdiction du village était de ne pas aller voir sa tombe. Après plusieurs années elle est morte. Elle avait deux tombes à son nom : une très jeune, et une de sa vieillesse.

# HAPPINESS TORN APART

by Thege Mungu

What is happiness? For me, it means living safely, happily, being surrounded by loved ones, one's family, one's friends, and one's community.

I remember each time we woke up in the mornings to go and draw water from the river with the friends from the village, making dolls and cooking pots, cars out of clay, and sliding on the mud with friends, washing ourselves with rainwater while running with friends, going to the field to plow the earth, an inexplicable atmosphere, of singing and dancing, traditional songs, with our traditional clothing, during the nights as soon as there is the full moon, parents tell us the old stories and the riddles. The community atmosphere was beautiful.

Suddenly all this happiness torn apart by a cursed war. The war...

A reality or a suffering that I do not wish on other children or adults. Losing one's loved ones, family, belongings, cattle, and one's community, walking non-stop to save one's life, lack of food and water during the displacement, water you find you drink regardless of the corpses lying nearby, during the displacement you record the smells of corpses, the bizarre inexplicable sounds and images that stay in the head, especially the fear that stays engraved in your mind.

During this tragedy no fields, no harvest, no hunting, no school, or learning.

What would be the future of the youth? Who could put an end to all this, to the rapes done to the women and children? The fear, the odors of strangers' bodies that stay in the mind, lack of sleep, lack of self-esteem, unwanted birth, the cries all the way to the soul. You can find refuge but the loss of one's family, cultures, community, I would like to have a supreme power to stop all these massacres, but impossible, will the true happinesses come back one day? like before? Will our children experience the true happinesses faraway from our cultures?



# LE BONHEUR DÉCHIRÉ

par Thege Mungu

C'est quoi le bonheur ? Pour moi c'est vivre en sécurité, heureuse, être entourée des siens, sa famille, ses amis et sa communauté.

Je me souviens à chaque fois que nous nous réveillons les matins pour aller puiser de l'eau à la rivière avec les amies du village, fabriquant des poupées, petite marmite, voitures en argiles, et glissant sur la boue avec les amis, se laver avec l'eau de la pluie en courant avec les amies, allant au champ labourer la terre, une ambiance inexplicable, de chanter et danser, les chansons traditionnelles, avec nos tenues traditionnelles, pendant les soirs dès qu'il y a la pleine lune, les parents nous racontent les histoires anciennes et les devinettes. C'était beau l'ambiance communautaire.

Du coup tous ce bonheur se déchire par une maudite guerre. La guerre...

Une réalité ou une souffrance que je ne souhaite pas aux autres enfants ou adultes.

Perdre ses proches, famille, ses biens, ses bétails, et sa communauté, marcher sans arrêt pour sauver sa vie, manque de nourriture et d'eau pendant le déplacement, en marchant l'eau que vous trouvez vous buvez sans tenir compte des cadavres allongés à proximité, pendant le déplacement tu enregistres des odeurs de cadavres, les sons et images bizarres inexplicables qui reste dans la tête, surtout la peur qui reste gravée dans l'esprit.

Pendant cette tragédie pas de champs, ni récoltes, pas de chasse, pas d'école ni d'apprentissage. Quel serait l'avenir des jeunes ? Qui peut mettre fin à tous ça, aux viols faites aux femmes et aux enfants ? La peur, les odeurs corporelles des inconnus qui reste dans la tête, manque de sommeil, manque d'estime de soi, naissance indésirable, les pleurs jusqu'à l'âme. On peut trouver un refuge mais la perte de sa famille, des cultures, de communauté, j'aimerais avoir un pouvoir suprême pour arrêter tous ces massacres, mais impossible, est-ce que les vrais bonheurs reviendront-il un jour ? comme avant ? Est-ce que nos enfants connaîtront les vrais bonheurs loin de nos cultures ?

# MY DREAMS, MY IDEAS OF TRAVEL, MY ADVENTURES

by Tony

I always dream of succeeding in life, studying, and making discoveries.

My biggest dream is to travel all over the world.

I also dream of helping people in the future – helping make their dreams come true.

I was born in Togo in Djagblé in my mother's village, after that I went to the city. That's how I started traveling. I went to Ghana (Accra), after that I traveled to Turkey, after Turkey I traveled on the Mediterranean to come to Greece.

So, after that I came to Athens, I traveled to Thessaloniki and to the island of Crete.

I dream of spending the weekend in Switzerland, after taking the train to go to Rome in Italy, to make discoveries, to take photos for my memories.

And, also, I want to travel to Canada to study, to learn things.

# MES RÊVES, MES IDÉES DE VOYAGES, MES AVENTURES

par Tony

Je rêve toujours de réussir dans la vie, faire des études et des découvertes.

Mon plus grand rêve c'est de faire des voyages partout dans le monde.

Je rêve aussi d'aider les gens dans l'avenir--aider à réaliser leurs rêves.

Je suis née au Togo a Djagblé dans le village de ma mère, après je suis venu en ville. C'est comme ça que j'ai commencé par voyager. Je suis allé au Ghana (Accra), après ça j'ai voyagé dans la Turquie, après la Turquie j'ai voyagé par la Méditerranée pour venir en Grèce.

Alors, après ça je suis venu à Athènes, j'ai voyagé à Thessalonique et a lisle de Crète.

Je rêve d'aller passer le week-end en Suisse, après de prendre le train pour venir à Rome en Italie, faire des découvertes, prendre des photos pour mes souvenirs.

Et aussi j'ai envie de voyager au Canada pour faire des études, apprendre des choses.

# AFTERWORD

by Jayne Fleming

My father died in an airplane crash when I was 11 years old. My mother became a widow with 5 children. The world became frightening and sad. My 5th grade English teacher told me about a writing contest. I submitted a story about a coat hanger that didn't like the clothes it was wearing. The story was about identity, loss, grief, and fear. I won the contest. I became a writer. Not because I won. Because writing gave me a sense of peace in a shattered world.

Four decades later, I'm still a writer. I'm also a human rights lawyer at Reed Smith LLP and the director of Lamp Lifeboat Ladder, a resettlement program for survivors of war and torture. Last year, I wrote a story about an Iraqi woman forced to flee her country. A literary journal published the story. The editors asked if others in our program would like to be writers. We already had a poet from Syria and an artist from Iraq in our group. I felt sure many other writers would emerge if we created space for this.

I asked Sophie McCann and Catherine Filloux for guidance. Sophie is our Creativity and Communications Director. Catherine is a world-renowned playwright and friend. They put out a call and 27 writers from 7 countries joined the group. Catherine guided the writers in creating a collection of pieces on the topic of Dreams. Sophie and our international team supported this process in their tender, creative way.

Although the 27 writers are from different countries and speak different languages, there is a thread running through the work. There is light and dark, covering and uncovering. There is mystery in the writing, something felt but unspoken. Some writers are discovering their voice for the first time. Others have been writing for many years.

We will continue the writing program because the writers are full of courage and wisdom. We will continue because some writers have asked to go deeper. We will continue because the world needs their voices. We will continue because perhaps writing is a way of creating peace in a shattered world.

We hope you will continue with us...

# LAMP LIFEBOAT LADDER

A public-private partnership for resettlement of survivors of torture and sexual violence



Lamp Lifeboat Ladder rejects ideas of containment and exclusion of people forced to flee their homeland and builds upon a vision of community and inclusion. By reimagining and expanding pathways for protection, Lamp Lifeboat Ladder allows each of us to play a role in accompanying survivors on the pathway to safety and healing.



To join us in building our new vision, please contact **Jayne Fleming** at [jfleming@reedsmith.com](mailto:jfleming@reedsmith.com)

Help provide a pathway to safety for survivors. **Visit [lamplifeboatladder.org](https://lamplifeboatladder.org) to donate today.**

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