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A Song for Reconciliation

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A Song for Reconciliation

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Far away from the land noises of the vehicles and factories, there lies my peaceful small Syrian village, surrounded by wide green fields. Among these green fields there is a narrow stream of water, which is the source of life for this corner of the world. As the sun rises in the blue sky, it makes the surface of the water glitter like a shimmering stream of silver."

Cover Page Footnote

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Mamdouh Alsafadi

A Song for Reconciliation

Far away from the land noises of the vehicles and factories, there lies my peaceful small Syrian village, surrounded by wide green fields. Among these green fields there is a narrow stream of water, which is the source of life for this corner of the world. As the sun rises in the blue sky, it makes the surface of the water glitter like a shimmering stream of silver.

This small lush valley is the place where all the peasants meet during the lunchtime when they take a break from their fieldwork. Breaking bread, sharing their lunch, they chat and laugh together. The mid-day sunshine penetrates their weathered skin. Their hands bear the weight of their forebearers. Here you can listen to the flying bright-winged birds singing happily their songs of freedom in the seemingly peaceful landscape. They swarm through tunnel of the white, plump clouds. Whenever you approach this valley, you can smell the scent of wet soil and green grass. Here, in this valley, I feel as if I could become part of the beaming light of the sun. In this place, I could forget the troubles around me. I could turn quickly sideways and slip into a different world, forgetting that the peace of this valley is the only transitory peace. Here, in this valley I am able to fly with the birds over the high trees, towards the clear bright sky, gazing at the land beneath me where for centuries children of Sarah and Abraham, Mary and Joseph, Khadija and Mohammad have swept the grounds with their feet. The air is pregnant with the pungent smell of the spring. As I experience this peace, I realize that on the other side, beyond this valley, peace no longer exists. My thoughts flow with the pure water that runs in the bed of the river connecting the two nations of Syria and Israel to each other. This water is the blood running through veins of our nations.

Waves of heat brush my body and I grow away from the sun, moving towards the earth. I think of how great grandsons and granddaughters of Sarah, Mary, and Khadija roam the land on both sides of their frontier. They are my brothers and sisters, my distant cousins and my grandmothers. I call out to them to come back home. My palate yearns for the taste of Mollwah, the bread that we have shared for centuries among ourselves in these parts of the world.

From far away, I see a young woman, much like my age, wondering under the branches of an ancient oak tree, near the flowing water. Tender youth emanate from her face. But, behind

her calm face lives a deep sadness. Wasted tears pool in her dark brown eyes. I do not need to ask what might cause these tears which burden her almond shaped eyes. I too bear the weight of the tears in my eyes. I stretch my hand to touch her face and wipe off the tears. I want to call out to this far-removed sister that I too feel that the war which divides us is senseless. I want her to know how my heart pains for both of us when I think of the fathers, the mothers, the brothers, the sisters, the grandparents, and all the other loved ones that we have lost to this war. I think of the chasms that our burnt houses have left behind and I think of the ashes that blow in the hot mid-day sun, haunting us with the sighs of the dead. I lift my hand to dry a tear coming down my cheek. A warm and soft breeze brush past my thoughts of flowery meadows, of white clouds, of honeysuckle-covered walls, of giggling children bring a smile to my face. I feel as if the warm hand of my far-removed sister, on that other side of the valley, touches my shoulder. For one solitary moment, I sense that we are breathing in peace, with one pulse and one heart, embracing each other in reconciliation, calling out to each other to come home.