

AU Kuwait

Review

ARTS & LITERARY JOURNAL



< POETRY + FICTION + ARTWORK >

Spring 2008

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY *of* KUWAIT

EDITORIAL BOARD

Nur M Soliman
Shaza A Ayesh
Fatmah H al-Qadfan
Hooda S Qaddumi
Mona K Hussein

FACULTY ADVISORS

Craig Loomis
Maryam Hosseinnia

Design
Maryam Hosseinnia



The American University of Kuwait's Arts and Literary Journal, *AUKuwait Review*, is published annually and features fiction, poetry, graphic art, photography, drawings and illustrations. The *AUKuwait Review* is dedicated to showcasing the talents of emerging and established writers and artists. The *AUKuwait Review* is primarily edited and managed by AUK students. Submissions are accepted from May through December. Send submissions to Dr. Craig Loomis (cloomis@auk.edu.kw)

.English Language and Literature Program, College of Arts and Sciences
American University of Kuwait, Box 3323, Safat 13034 Kuwait. ISSN 1997-0056

TABLE OF CONTENTS

POETRY

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Noor Kortom | Boxing You | PAGE 6 |
| Nur Soliman | Saturday | 9 |
| Nur Soliman | Afternoon | 17 |
| Dana Al Rebeean | Stages of a Dying Rose | 23 |
| Tarek Fahmy | Poem-The American Dream | 26 |
| Hamsah S. Al Matar | (Untitled) | 33 |
| Nur Soliman | Morning Prayers | 34 |
| Walah Al Sabah | Life | 38 |
| Noor Kortom | Whirlwind | 44 |
| Alyaa A. Al Nafisi | (Untitled) | 47 |
| Walah Al Sabah | Faker | 49 |
| Fatma A Al Sumaiti | I Love You | 53 |
| Shahed Al Tammar | My Knight in Shining Armor | 55 |
| Noor Kortom | Writer's Block | 60 |
| Nasser Al Othman | Hunger For Soul | 63 |
| Fatma Al Sumaiti | Stand Up Tall | 70 |
| Walah Al Sabah | Grace | 75 |
| Nur Soliman | A Little Jazz | 78 |

FICTION

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Nur El Huda I Abdelhalim | Never Kill a Spider | PAGE 7 |
| Anurag Galhotra | Happiness: The Perfect Trigger | 11 |
| Mohamed Asem | A Moment | 18 |
| Mohammed Daoud | Late Bread | 24 |
| Jack Karrie | The Tree | 28 |
| Sally Anne Mohammad | Hidden Victory | 35 |
| Mohammed Daoud | A Small Gift | 41 |
| Yousef M Nayef | The Rose of the Garden | 45 |
| Nur Soliman | A Portrait | 51 |
| Sally Anne Mohammad | Organism Number 4166875 | 56 |
| Nur El Huda I Abdelhalim | Cheesecake | 61 |
| Mohammed Daoud | Entries from the Diary of a | 65 |
| Physician | | |
| Sally Anne Mohammad | Through the Window | 72 |

ARTWORK

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Nezam Hamzeh | (Untitled) | 16 |
| Ranya Al Mastaki | Mysterious Fairy | 25 |
| Esraa Al Shammari | Out of the Blue | 37 |
| Amina S. Al Anssari | Material Glamour | 48 |
| Sepideh M Behbehani | Irregular Harmony | 59 |
| Nezam Hamzeh | (Untitled) | 69 |

Contributors' Notes 80

BOXING YOU

By Noor Kortom

I placed you into a box today...
Folded you up and tucked you away...
Into a dark corner in my cupboard- where
A tiny space lay empty and bare.
As if my past somehow knew,
That my future would come and go without you,
And it left a space for the day
When only memories float alongside your name.



NEVER KILL A SPIDER

By Nur El Huda I Abdelhalim

She watched the spider crawl up the wall, across the picture of her mother, without noticing what she was seeing. As soon as the image of the spider consciously registered in her mind, it stopped moving, right on her mother's teeth.

Never kill a spider.

Not even if it was hurting Mother? She smiled. He only ever stressed two points, only ever got worked up over two things: killing spiders, and hurting sweet, fragile Mother. They should never be done. Mother hated spiders, and he knew that. It was what killed her. Ever since Mother died, she had been alone. He stopped speaking to her. She only ever heard from him when he had a note delivered to her on her birthday via a servant with the same four words written on it in liquid gold: Never kill a spider.

Okay, Daddy, I get it. But she'd never say that out loud. She'd never say anything out loud. She doesn't speak.

He used to try to get her to talk. The last and most extreme measure he took was to hurt animals. He knew she loved wild animals. At first, he'd bought a rifle, to test her reaction. She did not react. Then, year after year, he had filled the house with animals, sometimes whole, sometimes not. He employed a taxidermist and built a workplace for him. She stayed silent. And the forest, her haven, died. Now, she had no voice, no mother, no home, and no friends. She just had him. And the dreaded spiders.

There were almost as many servants in the house as there were spiders. The servants, too, came in different shapes, sizes and colours. But the servants were insignificant. They were killed quite often.

The spider finally moved, down her mother's face. It rested on her chest. She lifted her arm and placed it in the niche between her collarbones. Slowly, she moved her fingertips down. One bump. Two bumps. Before she reached the third breastbone, she felt the outline of the spider tattooed shortly after birth into her own chest.

The spider looked deformed now. When it was created, there were no bones to make parts of its gold and black body stick out. Absentmindedly, she scraped wax off the burning candle by her bedside and covered the spider trapped under her skin, knowing its 2-dimensional contours well, for she had traced the same outline for hours every day, days every year, until she had it committed to memory.

The wax slid down her chest and was in her belly-button before she could react. Not that she would want to. Hot wax burned more when in her navel. Angrily, she knocked the candle to the floor. It was a bad candle. A good candle's wax would have sided with the spider and not gravity. It was all about the spider. Everything was about—

“Once again, you have ruined the marble floor. Once again, you have lost control.”

No. I *am* control, she thought, gripping her wrist. *You* have lost control. You have lost me. To illustrate her point in the most puerile way possible, she turned away, back to the spider still resting on the visual memory of her mother.

“Ah, you see the spider. Good. I knew you were like me. I knew you would come to your senses and let yourself be mystified by the dazzling beauty of...”

She tuned him out. Not again. For such an all-knowing man, he was ignorant. Anyone would be able to see that the only thing she was mystified by was the dazzling beauty of her mother's smile. Yet here was the king himself, making a sudden appearance after years of making himself scarce, only to tell her a story she had memorized since she was merely a hopeful stirring in her mother's body.

“Stop it, girl, and behave at once!”

A mental arm yanked her out of her thoughts. Her mouth filled with a familiar saltiness, and she saw in the king's sad eyes that she was hurt, and was being pitied for it. A moment's hesitation, and then he approached her. She did not flinch when he pushed his fingers to the corner of her mouth and then slowly dragged them across her cheek, smearing the blood.

He dabbed his fingers on a bone-white napkin the servant accompanying him hurriedly offered, and then ran his bloody fingers across his teeth.

SATURDAY

By Nur Soliman

Little elbows resting on cold sill,
Half-leaning forward, children three,
Looking up at the clouds, big, marbled, still,
Pointing to one like a horse or a tree.

Three upturned faces,
Burnish'd gold by the sun,
Those delighted, eager faces,
Eyes fast on the feathered blooms, every one.

Little brother nudges sister near,
And points upwards, a little to the right;
Is that a turtle? Oh! look here!
Excited with this treasure of sight.

Cumulus peaks, tipped with rose-light,
White hills and valleys a-gleam,
By the sun shining low and ever bright,
Sky becomes theatre with every flash and beam.

And the spectators are spellbound,
Those three, with whispers low
And soft, so to hear the sound
Of the joy before them, above, and below.

Light on the windows of buildings far,
Sunshine on the gold-stained palm trees,
Light on the sleek side of the passing car,
And sunlight on faces as happy as these.

Three dark heads together near
A laugh ripples among them like honey,
Thankful for moments of pleasure so dear,
For this day made for them, so sunny.



HAPPINESS: THE PERFECT TRIGGER

By Anurag Galhotra

I blew my brains out today.
We'll get back to that.

Wednesday 6:02 a.m.

I rolled over onto my back and stared at the ceiling, thinking about what it was going to say. Don't be silly. I was assuming it could talk. I remember what it told me decades ago. 'You know, you're getting old.'

Of course I knew. I was the one getting old! For example, when you're young, getting out of bed is one fluid motion. You don't like doing it, but all you do is kick and stand up. That's it. When you get old, it's four very unevenly spaced, unevenly paced and unevenly executed moves. It's all very complicated really.

1. You roll over onto your back, stare at the ceiling and smash the alarm-clock. [pause]
2. You roll over a little more and push yourself up with your one atrophied arm. [pause]
3. You swing both your legs over the edge of the bed.
[pause]
4. You sigh, lean forward and use both your atrophied arms to stand up.
[pause]

Actually, there are five.

5. You turn to check if she's dead yet.

After I realized all five steps, I remembered that I just realized them the day before. And I was going to realize them again tomorrow. The ceiling had stopped talking to me a few decades ago.

"Morning sweetie," she said while paying more attention to her yawn. I asked myself why it always stopped at step four. Forty years since I started asking that question and I still didn't have an answer.

I got in the shower, looked down and just as always, couldn't see my toes. Oh well. It was going to be a good day. It was definitely going to be a good day. I would make it so. I would make it different, more exciting, more stimulating, with or without that thing in bed. Still couldn't see my toes though. I remember thinking, "I cannot believe even the water feels the same." I was wearing those chasms of forced happiness on my face (you kids call them wrinkles), even deeper than the day before.

But I was not going to focus on the negative. I was paying her good money, \$400 an hour to be precise, to make me feel happier, enlightened and more focused on the things I might not be seeing. You understand of course that I'm talking about my therapist, not that thing that was still in bed.

Now, my therapist had to be good. I thought, "Well, she's got a PhD, an M.B.A, an N,s,L, a WbA." Hell, she had more consonants after her name than she did in her name. She had to be good, right? Yesterday was my second session. I was excited about becoming a better man. I will never forget her last words. Well, actually her last words were, 'Sorry Dr. Ronsen, our time's up.' But the words of wisdom that caressed my mind were, 'You may be suffering from depression, Doctor.'

My office-chair could have told me that. For free.

As always, I drove Katlyn, or Kathy, to her school. As a father it's always good to be able to differentiate between your 4-year-old daughter, who eats toilet-paper, from your 14-year-old daughter, who's voluntarily bald. But never mind I said to myself. Today I will have a better day. Yesterday's sorrows are today's humor, or some other silly cliché like that. Hey, she had a lot of consonants after her name.

"Good Morning, Brenda. How are you today?" This was at my immaculately decorated clinic. She stood up, almost fell asleep and said, "Fine Dr. Sir, ahmm, Ronsen, I'm sorry Ronsir." It could have gone on for a few hours longer had I not just smiled and said, "It's alright Brittany, don't worry about it."

Into my office, drowned into my office-chair (same one that could have told me I was depressed), sighed and beeped Bethell, or was it Brenda. "Who's my .first patient? Is that the blind gentleman? ...No, just let him sit there for a while ".He doesn't know I'm late

Now before I go on, I must let you know something about Brenda. This will be useful later on. Although she appears to have two eyes, one is in fact made of stone or concrete or whatever the ophthalmologists use nowadays. And unfortunately for her, the pupil isn't painted on correctly. So she looks like she's not sure about what she's looking at. I'm not one to judge looks. I immediately think of what I left at home. But this young intern is so unsightly that she could easily be used as the next best contraceptive. A reason for abstinence and a solution to the planet's need to keep .making humans

.Anyway, 189 years went by and I picked up my brief-case to head home. As usual, I picked up Katlyn, or Kathy, and took her home. I could hear Jerry Springer's muffled voice upstairs. The food was on the table. My first thought .was to find out if it was fried chicken or some other bird she had managed to kill. I can't remember my second thought. By then, I was one of those useless humans you .find on the corner of the street whom you just feel like kicking. You know, for fun ?I would never do it of course. What would the kids do

The lowest drawer on the second cabinet from the left in the kitchen was where we hid it. A good ol' .22. Another difference between you young ones and us. You point the gun at others. Mary, the thing in the bed upstairs, thought it would be a great idea to have a lethal weapon in the lowest drawer, just in case our 4-year-old .toilet-paper eating daughter got really depressed

.I pulled it out of the cabinet and looked around. Two motions really

1. Cock it.
2. Aim it.

Actually, there are three.

3. Pull the trigger.

After I realized all three steps, I remembered that I just realized them the day before. And I was going to realize them again tomorrow. I asked myself why it always stopped at step two. Forty years since I started asking that question and I still didn't have an answer. I put it back.

“Hey sweetie.”... “Night Daddy.”... “Goodnight, Dad”

“Okay.”

Ah, the one monotonous act of the day that I cherish more than smashing the alarm-clock. Sleeping.

Thursday 5:56 a.m.

Roll and smash, roll, swing, lean, check.

I am going to make today special. I get in the shower, look down and just as always, can't see my toes. Oh well. It's going to be a good day. It's definitely going to be a good day. I am going to make it so. I will make it different, more exciting, more stimulating. You know what. I will make fun of Bethell today. I will flip off some driver today. I will tell a racist joke today. I might even cheat on Mary today. I am a new man. It is a new day and yesterday's sorrows are today's humor.

I drop Katlyn off. I stroll into my office. “Morning, Brenda. Do you need the day off or anything?” She blushes. She actually blushes, looks up at me and the vending machine and says, “No Dr. Ronsen. I'm just fine.”

Today's just a peppy commercial it is. It's becoming one of those days I'm going to remember for a long time. I marvel at the beautiful view out of my clinic window on the 60th floor. I realize that I have consonants after my name too. I help people. It's sunny, it's so very sunny, almost blinding. I call Mary. I say, “Sweetheart, I don't spoil you enough. Let me take you out somewhere. I'll try and be home early. I love you.”

“No sweetie, you don't have to come” I hang up the phone before she can say anything. It's my day. I remember my teen years. I'm feeling like I did when I took those pills that they told me were for headaches. The hell with my patients. I go get presents for everyone. Mary, Katlyn and Kathy. I get Mary her favorite perfume, by some French guy. The girl gets the 'Barbie' with the new and improved proportions. I also get my fourteen-year-old a wig. I drive by that guy who keeps getting kicked. I stop. I climb out of my fully-loaded Aston Martin and throw my keys, almost at him. “Enjoy it man. I'll get a Jaguar later today.”

“Daddy, what are you doing?”

“Nothing, sweetheart. We’re going to get a new car. What’s your favorite color? Okay....we’ll get a pink Jaguar. I have presents for you and Mommy,” as I wave the shopping bags in the air, almost hitting her.

“Knock knock. Guess who’s home, honeybuns? It’s your man! HA! Your man. And I’m here to love you again.”

There’s no Jerry Springer on. Huh. Wait. What’s that? I hear footsteps running towards the bedroom door. I dive for the lower drawer on the second cabinet from the left and pull out my .22. “Go to your room, Katlyn. Go to your room. NOW!” I am the man of the house and I have the right to defend my family and I will try and shoot. The footsteps get louder, heavier. And then they stop. My heart rate jumps up a few factors of ten. I start sweating. Now THIS is living. I smile. I’m not old.

I see a man slowly cowering past the kitchen door with his hands up in the air, holding his briefcase in one hand and his jacket in the other, a pitiful expression on his face. He steps out lightly.

No. Not now. Not today, Mary.

Mary didn’t come out of the room for hours. I just sat there on the ground, legs spread wide apart and the gun in my hands gently resting on my belly. Legs spread wide apart. HA! Legs, spread wide apart. Then the strangest thing happened. I thought about Brenda, that absolutely beautiful marvel of a human being. She was given a gift. She could always see both sides of her life. Both sides of her life...both sides...I started laughing. I started laughing so loud I could barely hear my brain begging me not to. I laughed more than I had ever laughed in my life. And there was no way to stop those tears from filling those chasms of happiness.

1. Cock it.

2. Aim it.

She can clean this f’ing cabinet for once.

3.



Name: Nezam Hamzeh

Title: Untitled

AFTERNOON

By Nur Soliman

The glint of china rim under sunshine,
The red gold depths of the tea,
The laughing, the smiling and the talking,
And the joy of our company.



A MOMENT

By Mohamed Asem

The airport was full of life and sound that morning. A female robotic voice boomed from up high: “Flight BA 0158 to London, Heathrow, is boarding now at gate 16.” Just before the security desks in front of the departure gates is an open area lined with shopping stores. Near a clothes store there sat a man in a grey suit and blue tie watching the tide of people in front of him. After hearing the announcement he seemed to remember something – it had been a long time since he paid any attention to such details. The confused tide of people tired his eyes, all colorless, all rushing about in a hurry. There was a time when he envied them. Such emotion, however, had long since burned out and numbed by a resigned acceptance to the things he could not shut out.

Random glances met his eyes. He had gotten used to their curiosity, their warmth and, at times, their coldness. Most of the time he would look away to avoid these glances, these revolting mirrors of reality. But that day he could not be bothered to look away and met each one with a tired stare. Suddenly there were no faces to look at and a break occurred in the ebb of bodies. Through the space the man was able to see a small clothes store. Inside was a woman wearing a red shirt and blue jeans. She held a shirt in her hands and laughed at something the store clerk said. An instant later she was swallowed up by a new wave of faces and bodies.

His lips trembled. That delicate face, those bright eyes, dark hair that fell to her shoulders in waves; these features were too deeply carved to forget. Confused images rushed through his mind – snow falling and melting on a dark street; candles flickering on a wooden table, their glow reflected in her dark eyes. Her voice and laughter resonated in his ears, clear and haunting. After so many years, he had finally found her.

The man in the suit wanted to say something but could not find his voice. He tried to stand or wave but could not even find the strength for that. There was another break in the crowd and he saw her standing outside the clothes store, holding a shopping bag. She checked the time, looked at a nearby monitor that displayed information on departing flights. She started to walk towards the passport control desks when she noticed him.

All sound vanished. In the silence that ensued Neil felt he would go deaf from the sound of his heartbeat. The world in motion pushed further away, moving at an incredible slow speed, as if caught in water or in a dream. Neither of them moved or said a word – both the man in the suit and the woman with the red shirt stared at each other, waiting. The woman then made the first moved and walked forwards. She paused in front of him, smiling as if pleasantly surprised, then bent forwards until her gaze met the man's and whispered, "Neil."

Neil felt his lungs painfully stretch as they sucked in as much air as they could. His mouth opened and closed before he managed to say, "Dana... I can't believe... Is it...?" Neil paused, confused at the incoherent sound of his voice. "Where... have you been...?"

Around," she answered softly, looking him up and down. "You look sharp – I" ".like your grey suit

"And you're... even more beautiful... than I can remember."

She smiled, her dark eyes lighting up brightly. "Stand up."

Neil shook his head. "I can't."

"Sure you can. Here, let me help you." She dropped her shopping bag and ran her fingers under Neil's hands. At the touch of her fingers his hands instinctively pulled away.

"No..."

"Did you think you could talk?" asked Dana.

Neil paused to reflect. He then tried lifting his right leg and found the strength to push it onto the floor. Looking up at her and down to his leg in amazement, he tried the same with his left leg. With both feet on the ground and with Dana helping him he slowly pushed himself up to his feet.

"How...?" started Neil.

“It doesn’t matter.” In the silence that settled between them their eyes whispered to each other. Dana smiled, “Dance with me.”

“What? Right here... in the airport?”

She set her hands on his shoulders and drew herself closer to him. “Stop being so self-conscious and dance with me.”

“But, there is no music,” replied Neil as he looked around nervously, his hands on her waist.

“Don’t worry. It will come to us.”

He swayed slowly and mechanically, waiting for a rhythm or melody to somehow drift in and take over. She seemed to be doing better but waited for him to catch on. She drew even closer, slid her arms around his neck and softly rested her cheek against his. Melting in the warmth of her embrace, Neil wrapped his arms around her back and gently held her against him. For a moment the world around them was no longer there. The ground disappeared and they floated in empty space, their bodies swaying as one to a mysterious rhythm, and their hearts pouring their secrets into each other.

“This will not last,” said Dana quietly, interrupting the moment.

“What do you mean?” asked Neil.

“All good things must come to an end.”

“This one doesn’t have to.”

“I’m sorry,” said Dana, looking sad as she slightly pulled away.

A heavy silence ensued. They stopped dancing, though still in each other’s arms. The ground suddenly returned beneath their feet. “I am not going to lose you again,” answered Neil with a stronger voice.

“Who do you think I am?” asked Dana softly.

Neil was stunned and took a few seconds to regain his thoughts. “We met six years ago in a restaurant. You sat with my friends at a table by a window. It was dark outside; snowflakes started to fall. I wasn’t going to show up – social gatherings never were my strongest suit – but my friends had been asking about me. I said a few words then sat next to you. You looked like you were having a good time, talking and laughing with everyone. I remember feeling surprised when you turned to talk to me.” Neil paused. “I’m not sure I should say this but... I loved you from the first word you said to me.”

“Carry on,” said Dana, her eyes softly looking into his.

“I’m sure this sounds ridiculous. I don’t know how to explain it, but, for once in my life, I felt like I had nothing to hide – like I was no longer afraid of the world outside my own. All I wanted to do was talk to you.”

A somber expression slowly clouded Neil’s face. “I should’ve asked for your number. I should’ve taken the chance.” He looked away. “How stupid of me... I’ve been in relations before, you know, but... I always ruin things because I feel too much.” He looked back to her, his eyes teary. “If only I tried. Maybe things would have turned out differently. Maybe I wouldn’t have gotten sick.”

She covered his lips with her fingers. “We don’t have much time.” Her hand rested on his chest. “Your heart is in pain.” She wrapped her arms around him, holding him tightly and whispered into his ear, “No matter what happens you must not be afraid. Keep me in your heart, Neil. Keep me in your heart – this way you will never be alone.”

Suddenly something from behind pulled him away. There seemed to be a lot more noise and activity. People who minutes ago felt distant were now close enough to touch, their glances brushing against him. Feeling his strength wither, Neil cried out her name. He cried out her name again, this time with all the strength that remained in him.

The woman with the red shirt stood in front of the shoe store – she did not know what to do. A few minutes ago she was about to walk to the passport control desk when she noticed the man in the wheelchair staring at her. He wore a grey suit and blue tie; his body looked broken, unnaturally twisted to one side, while his face remained fixed in a permanent grimace. He seemed unable to move or speak, but

his face had on such a sad expression that it caught her attention. A male nurse was pulling the chair backwards until he reached a set of plastic chairs where he opened his small his carry-on bag and ran his hand inside, looking for something.

“This is the last call for Flight BA 0158 to London, Heathrow...” announced the voice. People hurriedly walked across the open space with boarding passes and passport in hand. The woman in the red shirt strained to look over the people passing in front of her. For an instant she was afraid the man in the wheel chair would no longer be there, but was relieved to catch a glimpse of him.

The male nurse had his back to them. He set his bag on a chair and searched inside with both hands until he pulled out what looked like passports and boarding tickets. The woman with the red shirt hesitantly smiled and waved at the man in the wheelchair. More people walked between them. When she saw him again, his face was contorted into a slightly wider grimace. She laughed. Her hand instinctively covered her lips, ashamed, but slipped away as she saw the man’s grimace grew wider, almost into a childlike expression.

The male nurse was surprised at the expression on his patient’s face. He knelt down and carefully wiped the tears away. After saying a few words he slowly pushed the wheelchair forwards. The woman in the red shirt felt moved. Her eyes had a thoughtful expression as she followed the man in the wheelchair past the security desks and into the duty-free section where, a while later, he eventually disappeared into the myriad of people walking about, as if swallowed away.

STAGES OF A DYING ROSE

By Dana Al Rebeean

Roses are white
A bride dressed in delight
Only to find out a secret
That left her in a fright...

Roses are red
Roses Have Bled
See Me Laying half Dead
On A Bloodshed Bed...

Roses are black
You have stabbed me in my back
Tears I have lacked
Only to replace them With killer crack...

Roses have putrefied
My life filled with vain
Slowly yet surely
You have turned me insane...



LATE BREAD

By Mohammed Daoud

It's best to go at a little before sunset, where the air takes on a more reverent light, and the birds sing songs of praise as golden as the sunlight that pours into the gaps between buildings and the patches of leaves in the trees. At sunset, the atmosphere is full of color and light and warmth as everyone is driving home and finishing remaining errands or making last-minute calls to the shops. Only then, perhaps, would you better appreciate the value of the late bread.

On the way, the sidewalk glows with a muted rosy pink under the half-shadows and light. It is empty save for a small dusty shrub sprouting between the pink tiles or a dented soda can. The real noise is further down, at an obscure bakery sort of shop on the side, without a sign of sorts; you simply know that that is where you'll find it.

A small crowd of people stand eagerly at the window and halfway inside the little shop with faces eagerly turned towards the window where the bakers hand you the bread. There is the patient mother with her little boy in hand, the several men in ties and smart suits behind, and a tired worker with a cloth wrapped about his head, as well as the distant *imam*, or sheikh, approaching, his long robe flowing softly. Several people have crumpled, worn quarter or half-notes in their hands; others have picked up the provided sheets of newspaper – the equivalent of a bag or box for you to take the bread home in.

If you are inside, you will find it is a little shop with a wide counter, behind which tirelessly work two rosy-cheeked Iranian bakers, probably from the Northeast. Behind them, on the white-and-blue tiled wall, are, sometimes, the shop's permits and short blessings on pale, worn paper. A simple "Two, please" is sufficient for them to silently nod and quickly turn to slide the fragrant Iranian bread out of the oven and thrust it into your arms in exchange for your quarter-notes. What a small price for the sunset, the pink sidewalk, the silent waiting for the busy bakers, and the warm, fragrant bread!



Name: Ranya Al Mastaki

Title: Mysterious Fairy

Date: January 2008

POEM – THE AMERICAN DREAM

By Tarek Fahmy

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is about the ideals of freedom, equality, and opportunity available to every American.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is an American ideal of a happy and successful life to which all may aspire.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is about a life of personal happiness and material comfort.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is about hope for prosperity and happiness.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is about having a house of one's own.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is about having a beautiful wife and beautiful kids, too.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is a widespread aspiration of Americans to live better than their parents did.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is the idea that through hard work, courage, and determination one could achieve prosperity.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is a dream for Americans that can never be forgotten.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is a dream that you can talk about with your family, with your friends, and anyone who walks
along the street.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is a dream that someday would come true.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is a dream that Americans and other people will remain in their minds forever.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream!

It is a dream that makes America and the Americans themselves so unique and special.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream.

It is something good that you can remember about America and the Americans themselves with.

The American Dream... Oh, the American Dream.

Think about the American Dream.

Love the American Dream.

Live the American Dream.

Enjoy the American Dream.

Go to sleep and dream about the American Dream.



THE TREE

By Jack Karrie

The sun was up, and the weather was especially pleasing. He was lying down in a hammock with a large hat covering his face. Life was good and he had just begun his retirement a week ago. He could hear the sea gulls cawing in the distance, the waves crashing against the shore, and the gleeful cries of nearby children.

He felt something wet touch his dangling feet and he was startled at the sudden interruption. He sat upright and let his hat fall off the hammock and slowly hit the sandy ground. He picked up the beach ball and threw it back at the energetic children with a hearty laugh.

He felt rejuvenated by just looking at them frolicking about in the water and he was thankful for being alive on such a glorious day. Without thinking, he looked down at his age spotted hands, and reflected upon his past. Many happy memories swirled about in his mind and of course some painful.

She had dark hair and skin that looked naturally tanned. He could picture the birth marks on her face and neck, almost as if she was right there. Some vague recollection of the conversations they had one particular day came to mind.

“You’re ... just too much... I can’t take it anymore.”

At first he stood silently in his place, his face unmoving and his presence emotionless but for the rapid pounding in his chest.

“I told you how sorry I am... what more do you want from me?”

“You know what you did... an apology is not enough and it’s too late anyways. I’ve been thinking about this for a while now.”

“Ah... I see.”

“You’re.... wow.... that’s it? That’s all you can say?”

His silence remained but it was a different matter within his thoughts.

Their friends had always said their relationship was complicated, often questioning if it could even be considered as one. One cared at a capacity that was staggering and the other not as much. Perhaps the different energies eventually grew tired of each other and drove one another to exhaustion. In any case, half of the well had run dry and only one person wished it back to the way it was.

His hands were in his jacket pockets, he hadn't thought of removing them during their conversation because he was afraid of seeing the result of his clenched hands. The nails had dug deep into his flesh and he could feel something fluid lubricating his cold hands.

"This is it then... I'm sorry... goodbye."

He stared her in the eyes; she couldn't meet his fiery gaze and turned away. His eyes followed her direction until she was no longer in sight.

Suddenly all the words that didn't materialize during their talk popped into his head. He called out her name, hoping she could hear him. He waited and waited but nothing came into view.

He vented his fury upon a nearby tree, scoring dents and gashes upon its rough bark while it did the same to his already bleeding hands, almost as if it were an act of retaliation. He reached into his pockets and reached for his pocket knife. Almost as if he were possessed, he mindlessly began inscribing words into the smooth, bark-free portions of the tree.

He was brought back to the present. He hurriedly picked up his keys, leaving everything else behind and headed towards his car. Two hours had passed, mostly because he had forgotten the location of the park of his memories and mistook other parks as being the one he sought.

He got out of his car and headed towards the park's gated entrance when suddenly his phone rang

"Hey, did you leave? We've just started the barbeque," an anxious voice said"

No I'm coming back don't worry; I just wanted to say hello to an old friend who"
.I heard was in town for just today. Save me some food!" he said jokingly
".Ok, don't be late. Bye"

He continued his swift pace and was reassured that he was in the right place when he spotted a familiar, worn down pathway.

As he walked, he couldn't help but take in all the beautiful scenery surrounding him. He finally found his friend, and made his way in the friend's direction. He placed his hand on his friend's body.

"It's been a while, hasn't it?"

His friend remained soundless and yet seemingly exhibited a silent but welcoming gesture

.I hope you're still not mad about that," he said lightheartedly"

He felt along his friend's rough hide, looking for something. His fingers searched long and hard until he found rough carvings. For a moment, he didn't breathe nor blink, and he found himself backing away from the tree. He had subconsciously hoped that his search would remain fruitless or that he wouldn't have found the precise park. And yet, he could not hide away any longer. He cautiously made his way back to the tree and eyed the engravings with a slight feeling of fear that was mounting up

It read:

I cared for you, I was there for you, I bled for you, I cried for you. Do not my actions speak more loudly than any words possibly could? Had you wished for me to bleed more, I would have done so. Had you wished for me to be the person you wanted me to be, I would have done so. Whereas I inquired about your days and you not of mine, had you only asked to hear of but a mere glimpse of my life, I would have been full of joy. But nay that moment never came. Alas, in return for all that I was, for my utmost devotion to you, you abandoned me. And yet I will always love and cherish you regardless. Let these words stand testament to my claim throughout all of time itself. 2004

Once he finished reading, he stood back. A poem, he pondered? Time had robbed him of any explanation as to what he might have meant when he had written this onto the tree. Slightly disoriented and hounded with questions, he made his way back to his car. He was ten minutes away from the beach and was on time for his grandson's birthday party. His phone rang and he instinctively placed the phone on his ear, mistakenly thinking that it was a phone call

He realized his mistake when the traffic ahead of him slowed to a halt with the traffic light turning red. It was a message and the moment he was about to read the first sentence of the message, his radio blared a familiar tune. It was a familiar song, one from his teenage years he recognized.

“Hey, Majid! It's been a while! How have you been? What's new with you? I was rummaging through some of my things when suddenly I remembered you all of a sudden. So I looked through the yellow pages and found your name. Please do forgive me for intruding upon you like this, especially after so many years! But I really wanted to see how you were doing. My grandchildren are driving me crazy even as I type this but they are a joy in my life and my husband is actually encouraging them! What a silly man he is but oh how I so dearly love him. I do realize that this isn't the best means in which to reunite with old friends but I just wanted to let you know that we are having a gathering this Wednesday to bring back together old friends. You simply must come, and I truly hope to see you there. Have a great day.

Jumana”

His mind went blank but the sudden blaring of horns behind him brought him back to reality and set him back on his way.

“Friend... huh,” he thought. This particular word stuck out and it took him a while to shake away feelings of nostalgia.

“This was... our song,” he thought.

The song ended and he had parked his car.

“Oh good, you're just in time, honey. Unpack the stuff over there and I'll go prepare the cake.”

“Will do, darling.”

He walked over to the chalet house and unloaded some nearby bags full of food and other items onto a large table. He slowly and gently closed the door behind him and made his way back to the party.

He picked up the hat he had dropped earlier near the hammock and put on a smile as he made his way to the birthday cake that was surrounded by happy children. Their laughs put him at ease and he was grateful.

UNTITLED

Hamsah S. Al Matar

I see the waves crashing
And imagine fish thrashing
Twisting, turning, splashing

And even though they seem
Like a singular team
They struggle alone upstream

Fins colorful and flashing



MORNING PRAYERS

By Nur Soliman

The light between the curtains comes gold
And falls over the child, head bowed in loving prayer;
As he murmurs sweet words of thanks and blessings soft,
For marble clouds, for divine words told,
For beautiful knowledge and brothers' smiles fair,
Gratitude to God, so near and aloft.
The child sits on the rug, hands on his knees,
Praising the Lord for His immense love and care,
Praising Him for clear skies and sunshine oft;
Thanking the Lord for the truth and the trees,
Our God so near and aloft.



HIDDEN VICTORY

By Sally Anne Mohammad

The trees outside the window of Year 6 G were stained with gold sunlight as they swayed gently, their leaves breathing in the cool breeze. The small brown finches hopped lightly on the window-sill chirping, unheard, and gazing with curious interest at the sea of little heads bent in concentration over their worn history textbooks.

“...Would you please answer the question – Bader? What happened to Godwinson at the Battle of Hastings? What happened to him? Do you know? *Have you been paying attention?*”

The voice is hard, but weary, as though those words have been said week in and week out – which they had. The classroom took on that apprehensive silence as, with bated breath, the other children slowly turned their eyes towards little Bader who has slowly raised *his* dark eyes to those of the teacher, then quickly cast them downwards to read the text as the teacher audibly sighed with exasperation.

Bader’s fingers quickly passed over the text the teacher had just run through, feeling that his voice had become lodged quite firmly in his throat. The words were suddenly so distant, so remote that he barely understood what he was reading. He looked up again, and glanced briefly at the colored posters stuck on the boards for parents to see. The cut-up bits of card and the careful handwriting, indeed the rest of the classroom also seemed alien to him in his nervousness and fear of humiliation as did the faces of the expectant children around him.

He looked again at the words and struggled quickly to answer... “Harold... um... In the Battle of Hastings, Harold - he...”

Every eleven-year-old child knows the feeling of cold that passes over them when the teacher unfeelingly stares at them with impatience. “Obviously,” she said slowly and emphatically to Bader, “*obviously* you were not paying attention.” Bader listened miserably, his large eyes largely unresponsive and his expression painfully embarrassed as he rested his arm over his exercise book, concealing the multitude of pencil sketches that were sprinkled beneath his history notes in delightfully chaotic profusion.

“I am tired of you behaving like this in *all* our subjects. Now it is history... you *like* history, Bader and yet – you are *not* paying attention – you *cannot* answer my questions at all... I’m afraid I’ll have to call in your parents; this is *simply* unacceptable.” The words came as harsh and unsympathetic and they upset the boy, but only for a moment.

The teacher turned away; it was clearly futile trying to deal with a child who, quite simply, was not prepared to do any learning whatsoever, and as was usual she channeled her attention entirely to the rest of the children, leaving Bader free to finish working on his careful pictures right under his neat blue heading: “Battle of Hastings: 1066.”

Bader droned out the teacher’s voice as was his habit these days and picked up his pencil. Before he continued, he paused and studied with satisfaction the progress he had made. Yes, the shading on the horse’s head had come out quite nicely, and those Norman helmets looked particularly detailed. Now, he decided as he picked up her pencil and leaned his face closer to the page, all that was left to do was finish drawing the arrow that Harold was pulling out of his eye...



Name: Esraa Al Shammari

Title: Out of the Blue

Date: August 2007

LIFE

By Walah Al Sabah

For sure the world is full of tricks...
A game where the loser gets to win...
Time passes us by before the clock ticks...
Today... respect to the kind is more like a sin...

Don't get fooled by the appearance...
Not all that shines is gold...
A weapon that man possesses...endurance...
Learn the lessons from stories that have been told...

Hold on to your principles tightly...
All that matters is the end...
Laughs turn to tears... tears turn to laughs...slightly...
You'll discover who's an enemy and who's a friend...

Learn to think... learn to feel...
For you have a brain and a heart...
There's time for fake...there's time for real...
There's time to unite...there's time to part...

This life is full of enigma... a strange theme...
It talks to us in a secret way...
The road to victory is not a dirty scheme...
It's when we learn to obey it... and when we should go astray...

Many people complain how life is unfair...
Many people don't know how it teaches the best...
Some chose to take their lives ... or in mirrors they stare...

Some followed the right paths., leaving the rest...
They say a miracle is a lie...
And people who believe in themselves are considered one...
People who persisted... who never gave up the try...
When life offered its hard moments right in front of them... they saw none...

Don't get desperate...don't lose track of the light...
Hold on to yourself... convince yourself that you're strong...
Desperation is a dark spot within your soul...while hope is bright...
There is always a chance... to right a wrong...

That is what we call a life...
It teaches us...makes us laugh or cry...
Sometimes you turn to peace...sometimes you have to strife...
Never question its decision... you will later know why...

Nothing remains the same...
Change is a constant fact...
Unknown gets to know fame...
The future collides with the past...

Learn to agree to life... learn to smile in its face...
Let it take you wherever you have longed to be...
It will fulfill your dream... take you to another place...
One step at a time...but life's job is to see more than you can see...

Wrong or right...
Peace or fight...
It all depends on how we hold on tight...
It all depends on whether we can see beyond our sight...

Love or hate...

Coincidence or fate...

Life is a mixture of both...

Nothing is too early...and nothing is too late...

Just trust yourself..

Put your hand in your heart...

The end is all what matters...it was never the start...



A SMALL GIFT

By Mohammed Daoud

Based on a true account retold to me by the character himself, with enhanced / imagined settings, of course

The sun receded behind lavender, silky cumulus clouds, soaking them with pearly light as he swerved slowly around the bend in the road, his hands lightly pushing the steering wheel to one side. The car was beginning to warm up, and he tugged the sleeves of his thick jacket further up above his wrists.

It was Christmas day, he thought, squinting through his cold glasses as the sun appeared again, sunshine flooding through the dappled leaves of the nearby trees and palms. He sighed wistfully. Nobody would probably remember me today, most of the people I know will be at home celebrating Christmas with their families... Well, at least not many folks will be out looking for a taxi this morning, will they? I can celebrate by myself, at any rate. It had been over a year since he had converted, and he had been feeling rather good lately. This feeling of quiet, easy elation had passed over him as he could now see himself in His hands. But it *had* been rather difficult.

He recalled the awkward lunch with his colleagues at the cab office that day, when over their vegetable noodles, they learned he had converted. All was felicitations and congratulations; nevertheless, there remained a strange, self-conscious air about the air-conditioned, dim room. Most of them would never dream of converting, of course, perfectly content with what they had, but he had changed. He had read the small, printed book one of his passengers, of a kindly disposition, had given him on her way out of the car, a long time ago. Oh! how marvelous he felt; what great awe and sublime, divine love had passed over him that humble moment as he read snatches of the wonderful book here and there when waiting for a late passenger. Oh! the truly pleasurable sensation of freedom as it swept into his heart with a flood of warmth and revelation, oh - "Number 55, where are you?" came crackling at the intercom, followed by a gruff, unclear response in Syrian English from that car.

He readjusted his soft embroidered cap and waited patiently at the traffic light, red and green, then rumbled off, still musing. *It was the right choice, wasn't it? I feel better now, so much better... I'm up every beautiful dawn, and do my prayers...*

but oh! how lonely it is today, not to have anyone wish me a happy birthday... His eyebrows lowered slightly in a rather pitiful expression, his brown eyes lazily studying the roads as he went off on a roundabout. It was rather empty, and he mistakenly took another turn, so wrapped up in his musings was he. *Things do seem much clearer, but I wish there was some sort of encouragement, some way of knowing that I'm doing well... Some indication to show that I am good, and am seen with love and approval in His eyes... I wonder how, though? I must remember to call Ma tonight when I get home...* The sunshine began to wash on his window, waking him from his reverie. It shone cool over the glass, twinkling on his spectacles. He was about to scold himself for going on the roundabout for a second time when he noticed something tiny in the middle of the sandy, well-worn roundabout, rather inconspicuous, but clear against the pale carpet of dust and shrub.

How he noticed it, he wasn't sure. It was a small, pale, rectangular object, yet sparkled slightly against the light sand. What was it? Why did it matter? Why was he so caught up in figuring it out? He looked up and peered into the mirror. No, *nobody's about. It wouldn't hurt to stop for a moment now, would it?* He sighed, then blinked with some resolution and got out of the car. The cold was rather pleasant, and his jacket flapped against him as he walked onto the sandy lot, bending down as he went. There it was; resting on a swell of soft sand, and slightly dusty itself, was a little book. But oh, what a book it was! It lay there almost peacefully, he thought to himself; the compact, flimsy pages close together like the yet unfurled petals of a young bud and the inlaid gold leaf bright against the colored leaves and painted blossoms.

He picked it up with bated breath, his fingers soft on the cover, barely holding it in his utter astonishment. In silence he opened it and fingered the flowing words in minute black, then closed it slowly and pressed it to his lips. His heart swelled inside him, and the greatest sensation of love brushed over him like the breeze on that cold December morning, warming him with such delight and belonging. He pressed the book to his chest with wrinkled brown hands, and put his face to the open heavens, praising Him.

"And I always keep it here – here, do you see?" He points excitedly to his dashboard, where a little box with a fabric flower atop it is glued there, and is opened to show the contents, a beautiful little book, delicate and flower-like. *"Yes, yes, I keep it here... I keep this from when I find it..."* he is older now, the wrinkles showing in the dark tan folds of his skin as he smiles brightly, still pleased as ever with his special gift. He

turns right now at the U-turn, and continues to chat as he turns the flash indicator off. *“It is gift from God... gift from God to me, yes? Ever’ morning, I wake up – in the dawn, and I pray, then I come to this car and take the book and kiss it -”* and he pats the little wooden box fondly. *“It is my special gift so I never forget that I did a good thing – a good thing to convert – ah, here I stop for you, yes? No - down there, at the gate? OK. Yes, now I feel good, it make me feel good that He know I am here, and give me this gift; when everyone forget my birthday, I get gift from Him,”* and he points upward with such evident joy on that worn, weathered, laughing face. *“It is His present to me.”*

WHIRLWIND

By Noor Kortom

I'm drowning
and
I'm falling.
Into this bright darkness,
into this lust.
Aspiration...
Craving...
This untamed passion,
found in the dark rays of your eyes.
Rays that only I can see,
only I can feel...
That are only for me.
I'm plunging...
Head first-
And I've crashed,
into the comfort of your arms,
into the strength of you,
into the power of you.
And you hold me there,
as a thousand types of happiness,
steal you from my vision
in the form of tears.
Yet I'm still drowning,
still falling.
But always...
You catch me.



THE ROSE OF THE GARDEN

By Yousef M. Nayef

The rose must be waiting for me by now, in my friend's garden. I'm pretty sure she likes me, for everything she does implies this. She might not; I'll tell you what happened between us last time.

I am sitting with my friend in his garden discussing the mathematics homework when she begins to sprout.

Do you see that, Yousef?!" my friend says. "I've been waiting for this flower to" ".sprout! I'll go get my camera

.I kneel to take a better look at the flower and talk to her

"How is everything, handsome?" the flower says, reading off the list on the inside of its petals. "I hope you're alright. I just love your shirt; man, you look great in it. That's quite enough talking. Could you please carry me and give me a kiss. I know my stem is spiky, but you can do it, gorgeous."

I try my best to show her I'm not interested in listening to her, for she exaggerates. She gets angry; her petals begin to turn red. I like her when she's angry...

"Aaaargggh!!"

...but not when she screams.

Rainbow colored birds hear her and immediately come over to my friend's garden. They surround us, not allowing me to escape. They look at me with angry expressions on their faces, waiting for the red flower to order them to move.

"Come closer," the flower says.

I hesitate, but there is no escape from this situation. I approach her.

“Pick me, please.”

I pick her and I bleed.

She turns redder, but then turns blue. Blue means anger.

“What’s this smell?” she says.

I smile and begin sniffing myself, as if I don’t know.

“You *know* it, Yousef. That’s the smell of my cousin flower. You must have hugged her yesterday. You are a pure traitor. Who have you been hugging around? Say the truth, or I will order the birds to attack you.”

“...”

“*Say it!*”

“It was you,” I say.

The world around halts then bursts into laughter. Branches sway, birds fall over, and squirrels begin running around us.

She turns pink, blushing.

After a moment, the branches stop, birds fly away, and squirrels hide. My friend arrives.

“Oh, it’s pink today! Okay now, a big smile!”

Click-click.

UNTITLED

Alyaa A. Al Nafisi

All things are bright and beautiful
The cold winter is beautiful
The seasoned fruits in the garden are beautiful

He gave us eyes to see them
He gave us lips to taste them
He gave us hands to feel them

All things are bright and beautiful





Name Amina S. Al Anssari

Title: Material Glamour

Date: December 2007

FAKER

By Walah Al Sabah

Is it the world or is it you?
Are you gloomy or is that what you really see?
The lies, the hypocrisy, and the fake cries...
Should you try to correct things or shall you just let it be?

It's hard to live honest between liars...
It's wasted time to change people who think they're true...
Although fake is what they really are...
But they'll try their best to prove the faker is you...

Yes ... you're going to play their little dirty game for a while...
Then you'll win... and in the end you'll lose...
They'll laugh at you after they did what they did...
They'll say it's your fault... that you had the chance to choose

Later will you know that they used you...
Later you'll know that they're bad...
Sometimes crooked people remain crooked...
Be happy that you left them... Be glad

Consumed in their own world...
Arrogantly calling themselves the center of this life...
Act clever... and let them believe their own lie...
Eventually they'll crash harder than anyone else with much strife...

The horn has to blow one day...
And the mask will fall to reveal the ugly face...
The time has come to unveil the truth...

What a shameful moment, what a disgrace....

Despite the pain, the agony, and the sleepless nights...
I assure you never will you feel more peace than now...
There is nothing better than coming clean...giving up the fights...
For your enemies will later come to you... and bow.

Don't seek revenge for those who have done you harm...
But let revenge come at its own pace...
In patience and endurance there is much charm...
In the end, they'll suffer and you'll win the case...

So raise your head up high...
For you have won this dirty game...
By not playing it with them... but by losing it...
In losing it you sanctified your name...

Famous by opposing the majority...
And following the little voice within...
Instead of listening to the authority...
You have decided to leave where you've been.

It's hard to look at the world in a nice way again...
After all the situations you've been through...
Well, in the end... life is beautiful...
Although it's difficult to maintain that view...

Trust me... it's hard to live honest between liars...
It's wasted time to change people who think they're true...
Although fake is what they really are...
But they'll try their best to prove the faker is you...



A PORTRAIT

By Nur Soliman

The pale setting-sun-sunshine cascades through the window and over our heads as we all hug him, his arms over all three of us, his grandchildren. His welcome is always so warm and encompassing. After a cup of tea for all of us, and the mandarin or baklava or plums he makes sure to share with us all, we will carefully lay the book on his lap and ask if he'd like to look at it. His sharp, blue-grey eyes scan the glossy monochrome cover, and his eyebrows rise in approval. "Hmmm... yes," he murmurs appreciatively and smiles, proceeding to open the book.

This is the cue for us to quickly gather about his armchair, and for my mother to take us through the book. We see a picture of a sidewalk in Cairo with a bend in the wide road, and the tall trees with overhanging branches laden with leaves and flowers by the wide, empty road. There is the old lamppost, with the charming faience decoration about the capital. It is a very lovely, Oriental picture of colonial Cairo, and is enough to spark a romantic reverie about the old days. One old photograph is enough for my parents to remark that you could always smell the sweet jasmine wafting across those lanes lined by trees.

The captions tell a great deal, no doubt; the date, place, description. And the picture is evocative of the time in itself; a poem or ballad to the rosy Cairene past. We spend a moment or two exploring the picture, the shade of brown or the gleam on the car or the smoothness of the woman's cheek, and then we look up at our grandfather who, serious-eyed, is gazing at the picture attentively, saying clearly, "I used to stand here, often, when I was just a young man."

There is no need to explain how this clearly heightens the value of the photograph for us – now does it have greater meaning and richer perspective. After we all voice our obvious pleasure and surprise and press questions, he continues calmly. "Yes, yes; this is part of a long, long sidewalk, where you can walk on for a long time. When I was bored, you know, I'd walk the whole distance, listening to the people, watching the cars... ah, yes... that was the life. And you know, near this was the shop I used to buy snacks from when we were all college boys..." Then he motions for my brother to finish off his cup of tea, and presses more fruit or sweets on us.

“You know, what was really nice was walking into the large, elegant hotels and hearing the Jazz! Oh...” he rumbles out a cough of appreciation, and his rosy cheeks flush with pleasure. “Those days were good... yes... Of course, first there were the British... Then those young Americans came later... really added spark to the place... they’d throw up the girls in the air – right up in the air, like so - and do the jitterbug... And all those young Italians and Greeks would be at the dance inside, of course... here, have another mandarin – share it with your brother.”

Now, the picture is but a snapshot of a larger, living picture, given color and context. It has in-roads and shops on the side, and relatives who used to live nearby, and is but a frame to a larger scene. What’s more is that it paints a portrait of our grandfather for us. My mother reminds us that the good thing about showing our grandfather these photographs is it will remind him of many stories of his youth that he may never remember to tell. One photograph we talked about – a very handsome picture of himself, in fact, in an elegant white shirt– led him to tell us of how he enrolled for law at university.

When he is done with the pictures, and begins discussing the editorial in today’s newspaper with my mother, leaving us to go and play a board game on the carpet or finish our homework, a feeling of delight passes over us as does the sense of acquiring the wealth of time and history. Perusing, in the afternoon light, at those photographs almost adds another dimension to our being, making them a truly living portrait of us all.

“Yes,” he beckons our two-year-old cousin to come up to him, and lifts him up onto his lap. “What’s that you have there? Oh, is that your new toy train? Yes, very nice...” He examines the shiny blue sides and the plastic handle, then places the train back in the little boy’s hands. “You know, when we were only little, and my big brother went into the art school, our father brought home this terrific little device just for him. No, no... not a steam train, but a sort of engine, we’d put water in there, like so-” and he would feign pouring water into a container, “and heat it with a candle... or was it a fire? Well, then the steam would puff out, of course, and that was the engine.” He smiles at his little grandson fondly, kisses his head, and sets him down. That was history. That was childhood. That was – and is – Grandfather, and is us too.

I LOVE YOU...

By Fatma A. Al Sumaiti

May my wings help me fly
Through the walls in the sky
Reaching out with both hands
Grapping hard with my claws
To the future my heart craves...
Screaming out loud to this place
To this journey, we call life
Trying hard to get the praise
That I have fought for with my shouts
With the echoes of your name
Missing you has not been so as hard as it seems
Though keeping up with this world without the smile of your eyes
It's a thought that keeps on slipping from the palms of my strength...
I love you...
In simple words, my heart whispers to your own...
I love you now, I loved you then, and thus always I will do
Now here I am with my eyes
Gazing out through the dark
Hoping that a glimpse of you...
Will appear from between
A star that shines, oh so bright
And a moon that blinds with its light
I deeply hope you are so well...
Like an angel from heaven fell

That's what you are
It's what you mean
To all of us...
Our shooting star
Good night to you my velvet heart...
Good night my flair,
So long my love...

.In the memory of my late aunt... Amani al-Saeed
.May your soul rest in peace



MY KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR

By Shahed Al Tammar

Along came my knight,
In the very, dark night,
“It’s been long,” said my knight.

Carrying his armor, which seemed so light, As his
reflection shown beneath the moon’s light, Suddenly it
darkened, and there was no more light!

And with a blink of an eye, disappeared my knight!



ORGANISM NUMBER 4166875

By Sally Anne Mohammad

Mr. Morrison, a plump, friendly man of no obvious age with small eyes and a small smile, was sitting in his favourite café drinking his coffee. While he sat there, sipping rather daintily at his coffee, he noticed a tiny black ant scrambling up the saucer.

It was peaceful in the café, with only the waitress walking briskly between tables, and a low conversation between two old men in the corner. Mr. Morrison put his cup down and began to observe her with some interest, the interest that occupies only the peaceful, unoccupied mind of the presently content. After a moment, realised she was after the several crystals of sugar that occupied the china saucer. With nothing else to do, he watched the industrious creature at work. He began to see flashing white spots after straining to follow her trail, and grew drowsy.

A few moments later, and quite suddenly, too, Mr. Morrison skidded backwards in his chair and went off in search of a telephone. He soon found it, and then began dialling.

.Yes, give me the police.” He paused, waiting”

Looking at him, you would not suppose Mr. Morrison was talking to the police; .he seemed relaxed, a little nervous, perhaps, but nothing obvious

Yes,” he began, looking outside of the coffee shop window. “Yes, the one just” round the street from where you’re standing, the one with the blue sign saying *‘since* “:2056

He put the phone down then returned to his seat, smothering a little chuckle as he tried to imagine what would happen when the police arrived. He continued to .watch the little ant struggle with a crystal and smiled, waiting

Harry, a great big policeman with a hammy, pink face and bushy squirrel of a .moustache, stepped into the cafe, looking about him

“?Is Mr. Morrison here, by any chance”

.Here.” He raised his fat pink hand”

Well...” Harry left off, raising his eyebrows questioningly. There did not appear
.to be anything *quite* so dreadfully wrong with Mr. Morrison

Ah.” Mr. Morrison said, rather embarrassed, then pointed to his cup of coffee.”
.The policeman nodded knowingly

He strode to Mr. Morrison’s chair. Several people turned to watch. Harry flour-
.ished a little metal box from his pocket

Alright, organism number 4166875, you have the right to remain silent for you”
“.are under arrest

Very calm for an accused ant,” remarked Mr. Morrison as he looked on admir-
.ingly at the ant as it was slipped into the box

.Most of them are,” said the policeman proudly as he locked the box with a key”

Thank you, Mr. Morrison, for your help, we will be much obliged if you attend’
“.the court case immediately

“Order in the court! Order, I say!” The old judge was an excited fellow, with great
eyebrows and bright eyes. Harry waved the little box in the air, and opened it, drop-
ping the little creature upon the accused’s chair.

“It is a 4166, your honor.”

“Ahh! A 4166, is it?” The judge seemed particularly pleased.

Harry referred to his notebook. “875th this week, in fact.”

“Well, what’s it done? They’re always up to their eyeballs in trouble.”

“They’re ants, sir, they can’t help it.”

“And I suppose them thieves can’t help it, then, Harry?”

“Yes, but... Course not, yer honour... well; this one was seen stealing sugar crystals belonging to Mr. Arnold Morrison, sir.”

“A crime indeed! Horrifying!” His face was pale and trembling with rage. Very soon afterwards he subsided, and his moustache bristled a little. “Any accomplices? There often are, the little miscreants!”

“No, sir, she was... alone on the job.”

“Ahh, she thinks she’s a plucky one, does she? Well, not clever enough for Mr. Morrison here, were you, you little delinquent.”

Mr. Morrison blushed delicately, turning his plump cheeks rather pink. “Now, Mr. Morrison, if you would please take the oath.”

“I, Mr. Morrison, . . .”

“So robbery case 4166875 is dismissed on the 17th of October, 2056 with a sentence of one week in prison. Got that, magistrate? Good. Have you anything to say, convict?”

Harry looked down to see whether organism number 4166875 had anything to say, and strained his ears patiently. However, the ant was not there. She had slipped away unnoticed off the chair and into the unknown world of little creatures where no man can roam.

“The convict’s gone! Strike me down, she’s gone!” The magistrate had turned crimson with irrepressible passion. Harry was silent and unsurprised, his pink face turning even pinker; with what, it is uncertain – embarrassment, delight, perhaps both.



Name: Sepideh M Behbehani

Title: Irregular Harmony

Date: 2005

WRITER'S BLOCK

By Noor Kortom

We sit here together,
Just me and this pen.
Emotions running through the both of us.
I, of pain...
It, of dark ink.
Both of us thinking,
Brainstorming together,
Of words that can explain
This state of nothingness I'm in.



CHEESECAKE

By Nur El Huda I Abdelhalim

The blade of grass suspends in the air for less than a second and then drops, as if it had been too heavy a weight for the wind to bear, as if the wind had struggled to lift it and then given up, just like that. She pulls out more blades of grass, throwing out challenges to the breeze, until she has mud in her hands and rainbow tears in her eyes, water reflecting the sun that never ever penetrates her heart. She clutches another innocent clump of grass but this time she cannot let go, and she shuts her eyes tighter and tighter as she tightens her muddy grip involuntarily.

“Please...please...” She begs no one. She has no one. Gradually her throbbing fist falls open and she stares down at her soiled hand. She suddenly feels extremely filthy. Glancing up, she notices a neighbor watching her from his window, a boy only three or four years her senior. She narrows her jade green eyes and whispers, «I hate you.” With a smile, he waves at her, contaminating her even more somehow by simply acknowledging her presence. “I hate you. I hate you don't you hear me I *hate* you.” Either he heard or he got bored, for he hurried away a moment later, disregarding her with one sharp turn of the head. She didn't know what felt worse, him looking at her or him looking away.

Tracing invisible patterns in the ground, she thinks of how alone she always feels. Inside the house, she is nothing but a ghost, a mere reflection of the colours around her. And outside...well, what's another person in this big beautiful world? A bitter laugh escapes her and snaps her out of her melancholy state. The familiar building of tension inside her pleases her. The good thing about sadness is that it always ends, killed off by this euphoria that comes after it, increasing in strength until it is all-consuming. Wonderful bliss. She must hurry before the feeling gets overwhelming. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, she needs to do something constructive. Go out for a walk, perhaps?

She rubs her hands on her pale blue jeans and pulls herself onto her bare feet. Cheesecake, her cat, lightly runs along her toes and dives head-first into the bushes. Slowly, watching her cat struggle to free himself, she gives herself over to impulse and steps out of her jeans, leaving them crumpled on the wet grass beneath her. The

dewdrops, combined with the light breeze, send a chill across her legs and she shivers slightly. Feeling suddenly daring, she crosses her arms, gripping the hem of her shirt, and quickly pulls upwards, revealing a smooth white belly for a moment before her baby vest drops back down, covering her body with small daisy patterns and smiley faces. Now she is energetic, and instead of dropping her t-shirt, she dances with it around the garden, laughing, her orange hair flying around her and into her mouth.

Little pirouettes take her over to Cheesecake and she picks him up and buries her freckled face in his fur, her hair matching its shade exactly. She sets him down and continues, taking off garments as she dances. When there's nothing left to take off, she spreads her tiny arms wide and smiles up at the neighbor's house. Freedom! She glows white in the middle of the green garden, the grey sky, the grey buildings and bins and cars. The breeze picks up the hairs on her arms and she pretends she's weightless. She flies...

And comes crashing down. It takes her a moment to get oriented. Black shoes dance in her vision as she rubs her sore elbow. She blinks and looks up, but her eyes catch the sun and she is blinded. She feels herself being pulled across the grass, feels the blades ripping into her side, her armpit. Her body is young but her mind is younger, and she does not understand. She wants to scream but sound escapes her. She is trapped in a silent movie, thinking in fragments of colour, blurs, and cheese-cake? Cheesecake!

As if he had heard, the cat turns around and trots to the edge of the garden, on the side away from the house. He looks up and down the street but sees nothing. Finding a particularly warm spot of sunshine, he sits down and starts grooming himself. Before long, the only sound in the street is of his loud purring.

HUNGER FOR SOUL

By Nasser Al Othman

My body paralyzed
Stabbed behind by sharp saber
Through my frightened heart.
Red tears my heart cried
Screamed with terror;
Choked my last few breaths.

A mist of fog masked my dead body
Flat on the ground melancholically
Ravenous eyes glared.
Striving to escape, my ghost tore apart
Lingering into the dark forest.

Dashed through the woods, searching for souls like wolf
Hunting for prey under moonlit sky.
Black cape, I blended in the night
Raced hastily and insanely.

Curtained the forest with sinisterly cloak
Lurked in canopy to trap a lost stranger.
Heard a murmur approaching and flew towards him
Craved for hunger fulfillment.

Wrapped around lonesome creature and whispered
In low cadenced voice.
Cowered with fear, he fled away
Face pale and life trembles

Yelled and screamed, he shook himself
It was hopeless.

Gripped him firmly
Cracked his bones open.
Cacophony woke up the black crows
Plunged within him and howled to the moon.



ENTRIES FROM THE DIARY OF A PHYSICIAN

By Mohammed Daoud

November 12th,

It's been rather curious today. You see, when I came downstairs from the study, I found Jane running about the living room with an armful of vases packed with flowers, stray petals over her shirt front and the water trickling over her fingers. She was humming something from the opera she'd been to last night, the one I didn't go to, and gaily setting blooms about with a silly smile on her pink face.

Flowers: horrible things, full of nasty pollen. Jane says they're good for our health; she says the pretty colours will do us good in this wretched cold. Ha! What does she know about health and colours? Horrible, gaudy red roses, vulgarly coloured daisies and violets. Now the entire house is strewn with all sorts of reds, oranges, blues and pinks; in my opinion it looks like a circus in here. She's asked the housemaid, Ellen, to buy handfuls of daisies and lavender from the old peddler down the road, as if roses and other things weren't enough. No medical reference book I've ever read said anything about pretty colours- and I've read a good deal of those, being the noted physician I am, with my natural capabilities.

I am the kind of man who likes order, and I told Jane so. I prefer clean, disciplinary lines and rigid, inflexible system; it's the only way to ensure some sort of security. Jane says that that is awfully unimaginative, but I don't know about that. They are comforting to me. I abhor all that is spontaneous, unplanned, loud or inappropriately cheerful; Jane *knows* that. So what on earth was she thinking to bring in all those flowers, I ask her. Jane ignores me and says the house will soon look like a greenhouse if we're lucky. Lord, you should have seen the thunder in her face when I said, 'God forbid' in complete seriousness.

Of course, I did the right thing and simply tossed the weeds out of the window, saying it was quite tasteless of her to stick them all about the house. And what does she do? She appeared rather shocked and her mouth hung open dumbly, as though I had just done something outrageously peculiar, then shouted at me, yelling I had no right to throw those poor, defenceless blossoms (weeds, I call them) out in the cold. She then called me a madman (to my complete surprise) Silly girl, that Jane is; doesn't she know what's good for her. Of course, I felt obliged to explain the benefits of medi-

cine and the evident lack of benefits of her flowers but she snorted at me and stormed out to buy more from the market. A condescending dose of some re-schooling and conventional education never did anyone harm, I'm sure.

Honestly, if she obeyed me like the good wife she ought to be, she wouldn't be so pink-cheeked as though she'd had a delicate case of allergies, or so shiny-eyed with the coughs I'm sure those lavender cause her. Calling after her, I shouted that if I saw any more flowers in the house I would burn them outside, to which she rudely called me a barbarian. Don't know how *that* one came about, honestly. What a foolish girl, that is. I must take her to the hospital for some tests soon.

November 13th,

I must say Jane's acting wickedly stubborn these past two days. I wake up rather late today (it is a Saturday, after all) and lo! there are three bright chrysanthemums and dozens of geraniums by the mirror right there before my eyes! Well, I was as frustrated as any one would be if they found chrysanthemums and geraniums in their bedroom, colouring the entire bedroom with their foolish gaiety. So I hurried downstairs in my dressing-gown, without even waiting to change, and beheld a terrifying sight – a rainforest, a myriad of plants and flowers and creepers covering the drawing room from wall to wall, at least three pots and vases in every other room, and even a flowering chive right there on my breakfast plate lying over my omelette. I ask you; of all the mischievous, conniving things a woman can do, it's decorating your breakfast plate with flowers.

Well, I did tell her I'd burn them. So I did. I swept them off my otherwise immaculate china plate and hurled them into the fireplace, whereupon the fire spluttered as they hit the hot coals, but dimmed down and reduced the wilting weeds to burnt withered crisps. Only someone as silly as Jane would be angry, so I stood firm in my conviction that she had no real reason whatsoever to scowl and whisper coldly that I was a heartless brute. She trembled with passion and turned pale, then shook her finger wildly at me, saying, "You will live to see the day that it is flowers, flowers and everything beautiful in this world that you live on."

Naïve nonsense and foolish drivel if ever I heard it, and that's the truth. No-one lives on beauty. It's almost obvious (to us intellectual elite, at least) that people tend to live on the fruits of their labour; chiefly, money. It is financial benefits that put food on the table. That's the only reason Man would ever want to do anything. Take my educated, affluent and most enlightened person as an example; the only reason *I*

slaved and toiled over years of schooling in medicine is so that I might put bread and butter on the table; why else, for goodness sake would *anyone* go to learn? In all my years of education, I can't think that learning for learning's sake really means anything.

Well, I had better get back to work. Back at the hospital, more and more people are coming down with Thames cholera, and I am needed at the hospital for longer hours these days. I am sure that it is an epidemic of sorts; that Thames water is a disgrace to the 19th century. I've barely time to even write in this diary, or even supervise Jane's almost hysteric attack of flowers. I hear she even spends time in the morning while I am gone to sell flowers to kindly passers-by. I hope all goes well soon; I cannot afford to spend time anywhere but the hospital.

November 19th

Am writing only to mention that this cholera scare is getting quite out of hand down at the hospital – quite sure 1871 will go down in medical case studies to come. I've at least a dozen patients in one of the wards, and my home practice is getting busier by the day. Do hope they find a secure sewage cure for the blasted water; I've barely time to be home. I daresay, though, that that is almost as much a blessing as a curse, as Jane is beginning to set up a little stall and sends to me at the hospital for advice, though I can't say I've been generous with that. What on earth will setting up a flower stall do? Well, must dash off to the practice – doubtless it is already crawling with fretting mothers, crying boys, and aching men.

November 23rd

Well, I haven't been writing here for some time – more than a fortnight, I should say. Reasons being, of course, that I have lost my job, and have been all over town looking for another practice in need of a physician. That epidemic in my department was quite inefficiently handled by the small staff, and we have had to have all the patients moved out. Of course, I have been looking for a job, but it seems that unless I'm *not* a physician, I am not to get a job elsewhere in town.

Jane, on the other hand, has done spectacularly well with her flower stall, and has managed to rent out that small shop near the grocer's she's had her eye on, and has Ellen to help cut and arrange the flowers. Now it's a neat little success, and Jane has offered a little job for me so that I might work with her – in exchange for decent wages, of course. I reproved her rather sharply for daring to make such a cheeky pre-

sumption, that I, out of a job, and with *my* qualifications, will stoop so low as to help at a flower stall? Ridiculous if ever I heard it.

December 9th

Well, I have been moping about the house for quite a while now. It has been perfectly impossible to keep up my practice now, simply too many patients for our little village. Someone told me this morning if I were so desperate to get a job I'd have to move all the way to Kingston at the head of the river. But I can't now, haven't the money for it, and can't afford to whittle what little I've got simply going there by train.

Besides, Jane is doing tremendously with that foolish little stall of hers. I have these florid-faced ladies come up to me when I'm skulking about in the park in the evening to bless me and thank me for having such an industrious, cheery little wife. I had quite a few things to say to them, but Jane says I'm not to trifle with anyone and that it would look bad for me. So I'm silent, and spend the morning in the drawing room staring at everything and wondering which brass clock or wooden chair would fetch a pretty price at Mr. Wilson's pawnbroker's shop down the road.

I'd willingly give a sovereign to help Jane out and be paid for it, instead of being that extra burden about the house; I could help bring in the new boxes of flowers from the back and then sort them out for Jane and Ellen. But of course, I daren't ask – It's that Scotch vein in me; I'm far too proud to return when I've gone and refused it so fiercely before. Not that pride is getting me anywhere, but I can't go in and *ask* Jane, now, can I?



Name: Nezam Hamzeh

Title: Untitled

STAND UP TALL

By Fatma A. Al Sumaiti

In the middle of the road is where we stand
Thinking of what has passed
Planning for what shall come
Believing that the light is there
At the end of the tunnel it's what you'll find
It's what we effortlessly try to reach
Every thing moves so fast
Yet every moment is being lived
People around you stop and stare
"What made this person who she is?" they would say
Not knowing it's them who built my bridge
I'm not so much as angry as I seem
But life has rubbed its edge on me
It trimmed my vision with reality
It made me taste the blood of earth
Then gave me honey to break the grief
Ironic are the tests of life
Yet wisdom is what you derive
Stand on your feet
And do stand tall
Don't be afraid to have it all
Prove that you are what you have made
Say that you fear not what lies ahead
Hold up the torch that you have lit
Yes, it may be what life has carved
Upon the stone where you shall stand

But it is you who claimed what is inscribed
My faith, my goal and all my dreams
They are the ship where I shall board
Give me your hand and off we go
Success is waiting ...
Let's go...
LET'S GO!!!



THROUGH THE WINDOW

By Sally Anne Mohammad

It was nearly autumn, but the air was still sweet with sunshine and birdsong. The long fields of barley spread far, like woven rugs of gold, and above them soared sprightly swallows. Not far from the fields were the majestic poplars, leaves broad and swaying in the warm breezes.

Dainty blue chicory quivered beside waddling, brown ducks as they loyally followed a young peasant girl in a red shawl.

Dunyasha, a young woman inside one of the little houses by the white cliffs that overlooked the emerald sea, stared out the window of the kitchen, a big, white-framed window, through which she could see the barley fields and the peasant girls in their red dresses walking under the blue sky. Her dull, expressionless eyes betrayed a sense of boredom; her usually mobile mouth slack.

The tea in the nickel samovar had long gone cold, but Jacob, her husband, had continued to pour tea for her after she had drunken three cups. The freshly picked wild strawberries lay uneaten in the gleaming white plate, although Jacob glanced at them from time to time, but with no gleam of appeal in his bleary grey eyes.

All was silent in the little kitchen, the air still. The young wife's rosy face was dark with the sort of boredom that comes hand in hand with irritability. Jacob, as bland as ever, continued to pour tea into their cups, working his pale, colorless eyebrows as he spoke.

"Good weather today, ent it?"

Dunyasha sat up, alert. For over an hour, they had sat without speaking, and she was nearly out of her wits, for she could not bear the silence.

"Yes, beautiful." Her voice, despite the dull emptiness of her words, was full of interest.

“Reminds me of the time Semyon an’ me rode Peter’s horses t’rough the haystacks t’see them Kazaki. Caused a riot, that did. See, it was haymaking time, then, and we tore through them haystacks.”

There was a faint sparkle in the young man’s iron eyes, and he smiled at Dunyasha, but she didn’t smile back. She had heard him tell this story several times, and had grown tired of it. In fact, she seemed to have tired of his well-meaning but dull smile and his quiet rambling and pale face.

“See, it was especially funny when Semyon jumped through one o’ Petrovich’s haystacks and fell int’ another,” Jacob nearly laughed.

“Oh, do shut up, you daft man! I’ve heard your idiotic prattle for too long! Oh, how dull and silly you are, with your stupid face and this stupid house, the stupid birds... ugh, I can’t take it anymore! All my friends are out with their husbands, going for trips in carriages and going to the seaside near Kiev; why, even one-eyed Ignashka’s taking his wife to the opera-house in Moscow- but *you*, you insipid, simpleton of a man, don’t care for your poor, suffering wife!” She snorted blowing noisily through her lips and thumped the china cup on the table. Jacob blinked all over his face and paled under the dark threatening look in his wife’s eyes.

For some time, all was silent, and the couple once again took to staring out the window, the only breach of silence. The youthful girls were sitting lazily on a bale of hay, listening to one of the young shepherds sing a little Russian song. The girl with the ducks was there too, and her beautiful brown flock was beating their wings furiously. Jacob longed to be with them, as he often did when he was young, but did not dare ask his angry wife.

Jacob began thinking, and his watery grey eyes slowly glanced at Dunyasha, who eyed the young peasants with another sort of envy; there they were, confined to neither house nor etiquette, and having a grand time and not caring how. Whereas she, a respectable young lady from a well-to-do family, was married to a kindly but uninteresting landlord, and never did the smile of the happy cross her face as she could not bear to imagine herself outside like that.

Jacob cleared his throat, and gathering just about every little bit of courage in him, spoke quietly, tentatively to the little woman sitting before him.

“Would you like to go to the seaside, Dunyasha, my... dear?”

“Oh, shut up!” she snapped viciously, whereupon he immediately cast his eyes down and turned away from her deadly stare.

The shepherd was still singing.

GRACE

By Walah Al Sabah

Here I was standing
Supposedly to laugh and celebrate
Celebrate the fact that my long-awaited retaliation
Has arrived

I should have quietly smiled
I should have felt happiness run through my veins
I should have expressed my joy in a secret manner

Tears of delight should have poured down my face
And the feeling of emptiness replaced by satisfaction
Instead, my feelings were out of place
I suddenly came up with an unlikely reaction

After all the injustice you have done to me
After the agony and the pains
I had the chance to break free
Instead I kept my chains

Somehow, you broke my heart
Although you deserve no mercy from me
You were the culprit right from the start
I was your eyes when you couldn't see

Now.. The world is all mine

And time is on my side
Glad to say.. After everything.. I'm fine
Never again shall you insult my newly recovered pride
The tables have turned
What was high has gone low
Karma has returned
And it is time you ought to receive your blow

But.. I suddenly backed off

I decided to forgive you
I could not bring myself to be the cruel person I thought I could be
It is not in my nature to turn my heart to stone
Although that may be you but not me

I will be better
I shall contain my anger with grace
I have nothing to be ashamed of
But you... I see your face is ridden with disgrace

Nothing evil I can do to you
Can ever wipe those tears
Or heal my fears
Or reverse those sleepless years

Forgiving is a quality of the strong
And here I am disproving all the times you called me weak
You have talked many times already
It's time you listen when I speak

Oh.. but I am better

I shall contain my anger with grace
I have absolutely nothing to be ashamed of
But you?... You are rotten with disgrace



A LITTLE JAZZ

By Nur Soliman

The brassy gold gleam of the trumpet
In the boy's hand, fingers on valves sunlit,

As the trees sway for delight so true
When we hear Chicago in *Rhapsody in Blue*,

The air is colored bright, bright with the tune
That gardenia Holliday or blue-eyed Crosby croon.

So light, so gay is the swell and roll of the trombone,
So rich, so easy sings the throaty saxophone,

The lilting tune carries the sunshine into the ears
Of the delighted boy, and his grandfather, too hears

The well-loved tunes from the dances in old Cairo town
And the flowery bubbles the band's notes, up and down.

The song of many voices by freedom sweetly bound
By the plucking of the bass strings a flowing, ribbon sound

As the effervescent trumpet sings free
So far from home, from the cypress or baobab tree.

The golden scales and notes, when the trumpet starts,
Turns the street so sunny, and warms all happy hearts.



CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Nur El Huda | Abdelhalim is a second year student at AUK, whose “major...keeps changing, which is fun.” Nur published poetry in the first issue of the *AUKuwait Review*. She likes cats.

Esraa Al Shammari is majoring in English Language and Literature and her minor is Arabic Literature. Esraa says, “This combination enriches the soul.” Esraa’s main interests are reading, writing, mediating, and listening to classical Arabic music, mainly Fairouz, Kathem al-Safer, and Julia .Botrus

Amina Al Anssari is 19 years old and studying Information System and Graphic Design at AUK. Amina writes, “I have many hobbies but my top two are football and art. I’ve loved art for as long as I can remember but the emergence of the graphic design field at AUK made me interested in teaching myself how to use Photoshop.”

Mohammed Asem is a published author with four short stories printed in the Airport Magazine, a local journal for the Kuwait International Airport, as well as a poem posted on www.poetry.com. He works as Registrar for the American University of Kuwait. His future plans are to continue exploring expression through creative writing and to publish a collection of short stories.

Sepideh Behbehani is a first year at AUK, majoring in Graphic Design. In her free time she sculpts. She writes: “For me, it is more than just a hobby.” This is the first time her artwork has been published.

Mohammed Daoud is a student at AUK.

Tarek Fahmy writes, “Now that you have accepted my poem «The American Dream», I will say this - «Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!» For me, I would say «Tarek, welcome to the world of creativity. I hope that all of you who get to read my poem will really enjoy it. That is all I have to say. And again, I really thank you very much.”

Anurag Galhotra is majoring in Business Management at AUK. He is a consultant at the AUK Writing Center. He wishes to spend the “next 10 years looking for the perfect sentence.”

.Nezam Hamzeh is a student at AUK

.Jack Karrie is a student at the American University of Kuwait

Noor Kortom is a student at the American University of Kuwait, majoring in English Language and Literature.

Ranya H. Al Mastaki is a second year at the AUK. She enjoys drawing and painting. She participated in the art exhibitions at AUK in 2006 and 2007.

Hamash S. Al Matar is a student at AUK.

Sally Anne Mohammed is a student at AUK.

Alyaa Al Nafisi is a student at AUK majoring in finance and accounting. Someday she hopes to become a successful businesswoman.

Yousef Maged Nayef is majoring in English Literature and minoring in Visual Performance Arts. He is interested in drama, reading the Qur'aan, and vocal enhancement.

Nasser T. Al Othman has written poems ever since the 5th grade. He writes, "The funny thing about my poems is that most of them are about death, and eerie images. The reason for that is I think images of death and horror actually wakes my mind up with creative imagination. Although I do write death poems in English, I had just started writing poems in my native language, Arabic."

Walah Al Sabah is a second-year student at AUK who is double majoring in international studies and social and behavioral sciences. Five of her poems have been posted on www-poems-and-quotes.com. Her hobbies include reading, collecting and writing quotes. She also collects waterglobes, and has over 50 waterglobes from different countries.

Nur Soliman is now a sophomore at AUK, majoring in English Literature. She enjoys reading, writing poetry, and drawing. Nur is also a board member of AUK's newspaper, *The Voice*, and regularly contributes as the Arts and Culture writer and cartoonist. She enjoys spending time with her family almost anywhere and listening to music, Jazz especially.

Fatma A. Al Sumaiti is an undergraduate at AUK who intends to major in Public Relations. She writes, "I have only started writing poetry a year ago so I have never published any of my work academically. However, I consider my contribution to AUK's Literary Journal as a first step to publishing greater thoughts of mine in the future."

Shahed J. Al Tammar, an AUK student, writes, "I would like to think of myself as a truth-seeker and a dreamer. I believe that imagining is the essence of living, only because it is in your imagination that you have total control over all of your surroundings."

