

Lami'a Abbas Al-'Imarah



Lami'a Abbas al-'Imarah is prominent Iraqi poet whose poetry is genuine, spontaneous and open to many cultures to which she was exposed.

Between 1979 and 1980, she published six collections of poems:

1. *Azzawia-l-Khalia* (The Empty Corner), Baghdad, 1959.
2. *Aoudat-u-r-Rabi'* (Return of Spring), Baghdad, 1962.
3. *Aghani Ashtar* (Songs of Ashtar), Beirut, 1969.
4. *Iraqiyya* (Iraqi woman), Beirut, 1971.
5. *Yusammunahu-l-Hubb* (They Call It Love), Beirut, 1972.
6. *Law Anba' ani-l-Arraf* (Had the Sooth Sayer Told me), Beirut, 1980.

Recently, the student union of Qatar University organized a poetry recital for Lami'a Abbas al-'Imarah. The following is a poem that was published in *Women and the Family in the Middle East* by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER

If the fortune-teller had said
That you would be my love
I would not have written love poems
For any other man
But prayed in silence
That you would be with me always.

If the fortune-teller had said
That I would touch the moon's face,
I would never have played
With the pebbles in the river
Or strung my hopes
On beads.

If the fortune-teller had said
That my love would be a prince
Riding a horse of rubies,
I would never have dreamed
Of death
For earth would have held me
With its golden ropes of light.

If the fortune-teller had said
That my love would come to me
On snowy nights, with the sun in his hands
My breath would not have frozen,
And old sorrows
Would not have welled up in my heart.

If the fortune-teller had said
That I would meet you in this wilderness
I would never have wept for anything on earth
But collected my tears
All my tears
For the day you might leave me.

(1977) ⁽¹⁾

THE PATH OF SILENCE

I warned you
Don't ask for explanations
When you walk with me,
And you agreed.
But we haven't gone far,
You said

"Didn't you kill a young man yesterday?
He was gentle, weak and loving ..."

My son
Don't dwell on it.
This, this death was a separation.
He was gentle, weak, loving
But after all, what do the dead need?

And we walked ...
I warned you
Not to curse the people of yesterday
When you walk with me,
And you cursed.

And we walked ...
Your eyes shifted back and forth
Whenever a girl passed by.
You were close to me
And far from me.
You were arrogant

And we walked ...
And we became thirsty
And we stopped to drink
I swear that I have never drunk before
The way I drank yesterday.
I was the cup
And you were the wine.

And we walked ...
And you were content.
I said, come in, Adam
Here are the trees of heaven
Strip them, bough by bough
Except the sorrow trees ...
For I fear, I fear the sorrow trees.

You bypassed the permitted boughs.
You disobeyed.

The sorrow trees darkened like clouds
Before my eyes.
And I cried.

You left, Adam, you were expelled.
Go back to wherever you came from.

BUT I ...

Across the rivers that have no bridges
Are lovers I do not know.
The thought of me excites them to rapture.
But I ...
I am only a body
Buried beneath the snow.
Beautiful and beloved
Forever.

(1978)

Note

(1) In *Law anba'ani al-'arraf* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assasah al-Arabiyyah Lil-Dirasat Wa al-Nashr, 1980).