

**Fairouz Bsharat**

***I asked The Wall of Akka for a story and it told me only sorrows***

**Poetry**

**Appomattox Reg Gov School**

**Gail Giewont**

**Grade 12**

**American Voices Award Nominee**

The Wall named itself after its city,  
Akka, home to the sea's rage at injustice and  
wandering ghosts leaving their phantasmic stories behind  
in globs of sea foam glimmering with fragmented memories.

*in the wind a melody is beginning to find its way over their names*

محمد جمجوم ومع عطا الزير, فؤاد الحجازي<sup>1</sup>

Deep in the cement two questions  
are flung amongst the bricks.  
In hopes for an answer they turn to all listeners:

1. If you, all of you who can walk unafraid of gunshots and  
don't feel rebellion as a bravery in your bones,  
were hung for your home being solid  
unwilling to liquidate and turn mush against  
the iron palms of the passing colonizers,  
would you separate the strings at the edge of your noose  
to forever catch a last glimpse of the erosion of rocks  
and the slosh of sea against bloodied cleaning rags?

2. If you were a frayed rope, would you love the sea  
as much as them—  
the first dead men martyred for homeland?

*there are whispers among the barnacled boulders and a slight tune*

من سجن عكا طلعت جنازة<sup>2</sup>

Behind The Wall a third question built  
in the breaking crests.

Overcome by the seas desire to flood  
lost to wispy waves of azure against  
crystalized sea called beach:

*in each glittering grain a voice calls*

كانوا ثلاثة رجال يتسابقوا عالموت<sup>3</sup>

Do their spirits still mistify and condense against  
their sandstone sealed fate turned sediment,  
racing each other in their final moments  
to be the first men of matter?

the clatter of shore and water finds itself  
flowing through a tiny band frozen in time.  
a flute fills with a mourning only described by sunrise  
after the blue is siphoned out of it by daylight and  
a <sup>4</sup> softly strums with a sadness that can only be named:  
the fear of forgetting the taste of freedom that comes with a final breath.

*The Wall sings to us a song that is its own kind of holy*

ويقول محمد أن أولكم خوفي يا عطا أشرب حصرتكم  
ويقول حجازي أنا أولكم ما نهاب الردى ولا المنونا<sup>5</sup>

Song lyrics taken from “(Min sijn 'Akka) من سجن عكا” by عبد الرحمان البرغوثي (Abdul-Rahman Al-Barghouthi)

Translations:

- 1- Mohammad Jamjoum with Atta Al Zeer, Fouad Hejazi
- 2- From the Akka Prison came a funeral
- 3- They were three men, racing towards death
- 4- Oud, Arabic acoustic instrument
- 5- And Mohammed says: I am the first of you, my fear, Oh Atta, to drink your sorrows (meaning to mourn you)/ And Hejazi says: I am the first of you, for we do not fear death