The Jasmine Harvest [1]

January 21, 2019   Writing and Faith [2]
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Poem by Salma Harba

Translated by Amir Al-Azraki and Jennifer Jean

The Jasmine Harvest

All we reap are
shadows of the sun
that leave after the rising
of the first shining star. I learned

not to get attached to the dew,
nor to believe in the scent

of the wayward jasmine.
I learned to smile at its scent

spreading in the wafts of the air near me—
for its whiteness is an infinite
aimless world
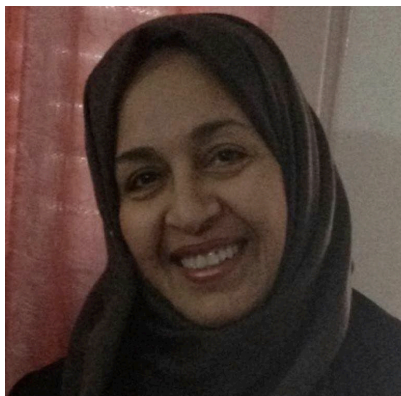that reaps the harvest of love and

the temptation of purity.
The soul of its scent captivates
the heart of hearts.
It is the jasmine harvest.

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Art Information

- "[Cape Jasmine....](#) [5]" © Vanila Balaji; Creative Commons license.

Salma Abdul Hussein al-Harba was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1960. She received her High Diploma in English from the British Council in Baghdad in 1990. Currently, she is a teacher of English in Basra. Her writings include *Raheel al-Nawaris (The Seagulls' Departure),* published by Dar Djlah in Jordan in 2013, and *Sada*

Nayat (Echoes of Flutes), also published by Dar Djlah in 2014.

Translation Note: *This poem and its translation is an outgrowth of* ["Her Story Is,"](#) *[6] a project—co-founded by Amir Al-Azraki—that supports artistic conversations, exchanges, and creation among female artists in the United States and Iraq. Al-Azraki has worked with several American poets (including Jennifer Jean) to translate poetry from the original Arabic into English.*

Amir Al-Azraki is an Assistant Professor of Arabic language and comparative literature at Renison University College in Canada and a playwright. Among his plays are *Waiting for Gilgamesh*, *Stuck*, and *The Widow*. He is the co-editor and co-translator of *Contemporary Plays from Iraq*. He has used "Theatre of the Oppressed" techniques with women artists, students, and refugees to address human rights issues.

Jennifer Jean is managing editor of *Talking Writing*. Her debut poetry collection is *The Fool* (Big Table, 2013), and her poetry chapbooks include *The Archivist* (Big Table, 2011) and *In the War* (Big Table, 2010). Her poems have appeared in *Poetry Magazine*, *Rattle*, *Waxwing Journal*, *Crab Creek Review*, and more. Jennifer is the recipient of a 2018 Disquiet Fellowship and a 2017 "Her Story Is" residency, where she worked with Iraqi women artists in Dubai.

For more information, visit [Jennifer Jean's website](#) [7] or follow her on Twitter [@fishwifetales](#) [8].

Source URL: https://talkingwriting.com/jasmine-harvest

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