

2 Poems by Lubna Alyousfi

HEY YOU

My body is his map to the world
He somehow finds himself deep inside me
And I can't help but lose myself with him
A touch that sends deadly tingles up and down my spine
Lips that caress every inch of my skin
In search of some hidden treasure
But all I'm looking for is tomorrow
I didn't mean to cry when he held onto me
Suffocating me in passion that can only last as perpetual as the evening
I was just thinking of moments that somehow disappeared
And memories that seem to elongate a lustful passion
One that lasted till the break of dawn
And he tried to convince me this was forever
When I had nothing left to give
He spoke only to ask me for more
A more that I somehow found a way to give him
The international way of loving, amore
He longed to be some foreigner
And my skin somehow made him feel this way
As if he were walking some foreign land
Land he knew he owned
That's what his eyes said after all
During his gazes that somehow pierced themselves into my heart
That hid themselves behind his adoring smile
And the hard beatings against my chest
As he spoke, words so deadly sweet
The thumping drowned out lies to keep me naive

After all, he wanted something to stain
And I just so happened to be longing for a similar kind of touch
He didn't have to fill my sorrow with words he conjured up
Lies that burned themselves into my already blemished heart
I simply only needed to hear his hello
Two words he used to greet me, always
That somehow made me forgetful of my wreckage
In some way had me weak at the knees
With a heart that would melt just at the sweet sound of "hey you"
Words that cut through me as I recollect them
But his voice somehow softens them
Makes them more believable, forgivable
His forever only lasts during nights that have a definite end
As soon as the sun would rise
Memories fade
And he is gone, back to his native land
Because mine is one he can only saunter once in a blue moon

I PLAY THE VICTIM, THEY SAY

Am I victimized or do I play the victim?
Somehow tossed in a charade of smiles
The conniving 'how are you?' and 'how's it going?'
Stare me up and down dressed immodest
Pants tight fit you wonder how I manage
Shirts low cut, short sleeves reveal my tan
You just don't think it's fair I guess
I spring my independence, flaunt it
Your liberty wrapped tight in fabric
You only blame me for my emancipation
The day I stood my ground and spoke my words
Let my tongue sink me deep into troubles
This may be freedom but autonomy comes with a price
Judge myself or be judged they told me
No real choice was given, I had to take it
Sometimes I wonder if I chose wrong
An attempt at un-censoring the censored world
Wait, I've heard this one before
You fear me because I stumbled onto the side that penetrates
'We are here to liberate you'

Is that not what they preached?
And here I am, making the same endeavor
From within of course
Turning the modest girl arrogant
They see me do it so why can't they
Now they're asking questions and you blame me
Try to tame me, shame me, rename me
Tarnish my image so they don't proclaim me
Sad thing is they want to be just like me
Limitless and uninhibited
And now you feel raped by my sovereignty
My ability to speak my mind through blood and tears
No matter how hard you try you just can't break me
Domicile is not a word in my dictionary
My words speak for themselves, revolutionary
Earth shattering, I know, you fear it
Afraid it will cultivate the minds of your daughters
No, they didn't bring me up this way
Don't disgrace my parents
I do enough of this myself
Shouting out vocabulary that opposes
Sorry Lord, I don't mean to undermine you
You put these words at my feet
Did you expect me not to use them?
Handing me a felt-tip pen and a pad of paper
And a mind that speaks on its own
Turning word into chants
Used by the submissive and the voiceless
Under their breaths they sing my mantra
Shouting it at the top of their thoughts
Yearning for the ability to run without fear
So they break out on the daily
One by one, so they thank me
And your eyes fill with hatred and misery
You tried to blind them but they see clearly
And it's all thanks to this liberty
Handed on a silver platter set before me
The kind your eyes only judge with disdain
Because I chose a life that abstains
From being constrained to a chain
Held down, sustained to maintain
A life concealed from an ability to ascertain
The difference between freedom of choice and profane
'Cause if you ask me
There's no difference between the ones that hide
And the ones that let their lives lead the tabloids

The gossip trails of the scandalous conversation
No my arms aren't covered
Yes ma'am I color treated my hair last week, you like?
No these pants aren't too tight
I think the shirt I'm wearing fits me just fine
Yes I do feel the need to wear heels
Yes ma'am my parents know I walked out the house dressed like this
Looking like this, too appealing like this,
Too revealing, exposed and bare just like this
I'm sorry that I offend you
Sorry that your covered from head-to-toe daughter envies me
For being me
Wishing she could be just like me
No I'm not saying she wants to dress like me
She wants to have a voice like me
An influenced, right-to-be-heard voice like mine
She wishes she had strength like me
Vigor and vitality just like me
That she wasn't so afraid just like me
So she speaks of me, puts down my name
Smears my image so they all acclaim
That she's so righteous
Yes, morally justified by the people
Wait, isn't God the only validation you need?
If you're so virtuous then why judge me?
Moral excellence is purely determined by His highest power
So who do you think you are?
Sure my arms aren't covered, my hair is flowing
Got skin from my head to my toes showing
Not too conspicuous about where I'm going
But I don't see your halo glowing
To assess the value of another being
To uphold a sacrificial image of purity
Only to benefit you in the eyes of your peers
Hey, wait not, isn't that a sin in and of itself?
I guess neither one of us can win
So why all the pent up anger directed at me?