

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme

Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom

**Large Print version of the
text panels which form part
of the artworks in Gallery 3**

Until we became fire.rtf

**After they destroyed the village
they planted pine trees to cover the
remains**

**In the wake *of the destruction*
we looked out towards the hill
but could not find the path**

**Decades set in
pine needles covered the land
extinguishing breath of pomegranate, fig,
almond
And then one afternoon**

a fire raged

encircling the hilltop

Burning

Burning

Burning

until all the pine trees

had been reduced to ash

And the terraces we had built

returned

Embracing the land

The fire raged

and raged

until *we became fire*

and *fire us*

baba.rtf

March 2024

These are my baba's drawings.

He drew them in the 70's and 80's.

**A few weeks ago while he was in hospital
we spoke about them.**

**Months before, before he was sick, as
the genocide was devouring us**

I felt I was seeing Gaza now in them.

**When I started working with the
drawings I did not know what would
happen with him.**

**My baba passed in the wake of this
genocide four days after his
birthday, February 11th**

He told my mother

'Gaza broke my back'

'غزة كسرت ظهري'

He left us suddenly

And left us heartbroken.

**He was born in 1948, in the wake of the
Nakba, my grandmother fled
with him and 5 other children to Lebanon
leaving my grandfather in Shefamer.**

**A few months later she made the
decision to try and return, the
journey back was very dangerous.**

**Israeli soldiers were shooting people
who tried to return.**

***Do you see the deadly repetitions that
make their home in us.***

**Mariam my grandmother was a force to
be reckoned with, still her milk
dried up from the fear and exhaustion,
my father was a baby only a
few months old. Were it not for the
solidarity of other women making
the journey who took turns breastfeeding
my father he would not have**

made it.

***These are the deadly repetitions that
make their home in us.***

**Baba lived a life full of resistance, in
every stroke of his drawings he
resisted, in his love for the land he
resisted, in his refusal he resisted,
in his laughter and joy and defiance he
resisted. When he restored
our three hundred year old home in the
Galilee, in our town Shefamer,
he removed the concrete to unearth
powerful Palestinian stone. In the**

70's my grandmother had poured cement over the stone, in an effort to 'modernise', concrete being a colonial material that somehow for those under the thumb of colonisation seemed to be a symbol of modernity. He worked ten years, with little money and resources to restore the house to what it was, all the while gathering people from the town to speak about a forgotten time before colonisation. People chipping away concrete, chipping away in one small way the violence of colonisation. Baba

restored the house, he resisted. When he was done he put up a plaque that told its story.

Baba resisted every day at the core of his being, and taught us the meaning of resistance to the core of our being.

Tawfik Abou-Rahme

February 7th 1948- February 11th 2024

I say we and yet oceans divide us.rtf

4 am

We are under siege

I say *we* and yet oceans divide us

if you don't leave

**they will demolish the house on top of
your heads**

We lose contact

**I say *we* and mean so many *named* and
*unnamed***

that share in a wound

that is *theirs* and *not theirs*

Later after it is all rubble

I watch you

***When I say watch I mean on a screen
thousands of kilometers away***

trying to retrieve

forms of life from the debris

***what is undone can be done and what is
done can be undone***

**You come out holding what remains of a
fridge**

**'This is all I was able to get from under
the rubble,**

**this is what remains, a fridge with family
memories on it'**

We are trying to string words together

But there is no language

only sounds

that tremble through us

being the negative.rtf

**Being the negative is to be the debt that
is owed to us**

**Being the negative is *being with what we
are indebted to*, all those that came**

**Before us and calls to us now
call to us from within their graves;**

"those who chant do not die"

**the call echos, call us again and again to
where we must be**

**Being the negative is being what seems
buried, but continues to sprout**

**Being the negative is to see the breaks as
openings,**

to be *that break*

breathing and being, being and breathing where you should *not* be

أن نكون الناقص يعني أن نكون الذين الذي هو حقنا
أن نكون الناقص هو أن نكون مع الذين ندين لهم، كل الذين سبقونا
وينادون الآن
ينادون إلينا من أعماق قبورهم
" اللي بيهتف ما بموت"
المناداة تدوي
تنادينا مرارا إلى مواقعنا
أن نكون الناقص هو أن نكون ما يبدو دفينا لكنه دوما ينبت
أن نكون الناقص هو رؤية الشق كانبثق
أن نكون الشق ذاته
أن نتنفس ونكون، نكون ونتنفس حيث لا ينبغي أن نكون

hospitals.rtf

**October, November, December, January,
February, March, April 2023-24**

Gaza, again and again, the genocide destroys every part of us.

Hospital after hospital, is bombed, shelled, under siege. Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, loved ones are buried in the grounds of the hospitals. The hospital becomes a burial site. The hospital is under siege, loved ones dying from lack of oxygen, lack of medicine, lack of food and water. Dina Abu Mehzen the only survivor from her family killed in the Nasser hospital, where she was being treated, when a bomb was dropped on the children's wing. The hospital is under fire from

snipers, people who were sheltering in the hospital have to crawl out, one man crawls for a whole day, a young boy witnesses his father and brother killed by snipers, manages to escape, leaving his heart with his brother and father martyred outside Al-Shifa hospital. The hospital becomes a prison. Patients too sick, disabled or old to leave are trapped inside, a few doctors who were not detained or killed remain with them. They have no water or food, the hospital is under siege, they are trapped in one room. The hospital is a scene of a massacre, hundreds of people lay slain,

maimed, crushed under tanks. These words are a complete failure, there are no words to grasp this unbearable, unimaginable horror.

All this only a fraction of thousands of stories. Stories that break you. Stories that should break and unmake the world.

S on writing

S told us:

"...They confiscated pens and papers, so that we don't produce, don't write, and don't have any production as a prisoner movement. It was a failure. I promised myself to go out and write, and to write all these feelings and all these thoughts that I had while in prison. To this day, I am writing, because what I discovered is that prison is a journey, not just while you are inside the cell. Your journey with prison and your relationship with prison begins afterward. It begins with how you produce after detention. And here I am writing, and to this day I am writing, and

**to this day there are things I keep
remembering."**

stream.rtf

**I was on a stream
That could have been a sea
In which I drowned
And everything in me
Was saying this is death
This is death
And I knew it was
Some form of dying
And then a voice called out
And I paused**

**'I want to tell you just a brief couple
Of things about that bomb
That I think you need to understand'***

**And knowing what happens after a bomb
goes off**

I listened

And everything in me

Was saying

This voice is life

Some form of life persisting

**'The bomb here created a radioactive
cloud**

**that ascended over 40,000 feet into the
stratosphere.**

Actually it surpassed the atmosphere.'*

These were the forces

That raged within us

And these are the forces

That raged against us

Within us and against us

Against us and within us *

'As the

Ash fell from the sky

We were absorbing the radiation through

Our skin'*

How many times do I need to tell you this story?

'We lost the court case. They came and demolished our home.

My father had a heart attack standing in the remains of the house.'

القهر

***Tine Cordova speaking about the fallout from Nuclear test site in New Mexico**

***(after adrienne rich, with ranged instead of ranged)**