Poetry Journal by Abdul Malik Leite

Title of Journal: Beige is the Color I See

A note: This journal documents my time in Amman, Jordan with poetry. I wished to convey the emotional nature of my experiences, so my poems are largely confessional.

Beige is the Color I See
Syrian Refugee

*A poem in the point of view of a Syrian refugee that portrays some of the intense emotions they struggle with*

Here I am again, with the claws of wretchedness embedded in my neck.
   I am swollen and oozing with puss. I try to take them out.
   They won't budge! Please, enough with all of this, my will isn't fit.
   I can't feel anything else at all. Its just you grave demon,
   just you my author. I am semiconscious and paralyzed, but my limbs still move.
   They thrash about aimlessly, now in the street, but before in my head.
   Is this sleep walking I feel? How can it be I'm still in bed.
   I must be, otherwise the dread I sense behind me, from this ledge
   that pours into an imprisoning abyss, is no nightmare.
   How can I face such a state that truly exists?
   Ruin is taking my face, my mind, and my heart.
   Its eating them for suhoor, then a wait until I am dead to feast.
   Though the soul it craves is but a barren bone
   hardly even salted or greased.
   A talon has found my brain – already? Of course. It pounds mercilessly, I must leave now.
My poor besom its alright to cry. Though you must look at that skyline, we're finally getting by.
   You were so special I know, but the ingress was a lie.
   From above I see, a crystal ball of mirrors, who all hate me. I have no idea why.
Waiting On Marriage

*This poem expresses the sexual frustration many Jordanian youths harbor*

I lay here trapped in this house, in my goodness,
but I wish to break free.
I’m not certain of how much more I can wait
I desire passion so desperately,
There is but a matter of time
before this prudence is traded in
for carnal morsels most divine
and sweet delicious debauchery.
I should just be a rebel and flee,
but that won’t offer liberty
for you see, I am a bumblebee
and demise lies with the spree.
Wadi Rum Streaker

*My Internal discourse during an overnight stay in Wadi Rum*

Its nighttime now, but the stars tell a different story.
I can see everything in all its glory! Oh God –
maybe this was unwise, I don't really care.
I am free and roaming like a desert sylph
and constellations walk beside me. All smiling and nude,
with giant porifera to cobble their paths.
And though the cold sand chews on my feet,
I float gracefully in this fluid dusk.
We can finally see the border between shadow and moonlight,
our plan is to outdo her tonight,
but who's that ghost in the distance? Is he getting closer?
Oh its just my spirit guide you guys. Oh no run!
Where did I put my socks, my pants!?
Wait stop don't come any closer, is that a gun?
He points it towards the earth and fires a round.
The bullet rushes down, and splits the ground.
My surroundings freeze and a sinkhole opens up
with an animal in the center, its quills buzz in excitement,
the constellations all leave for the sky, yet I fall fast.
I struggle to escape, how embarrassing, this can't last.
It swallows me – there is no way I'm staying for the tour.
Dead Sea

* A poem written from the point of view of a Jordanian youth about their feelings towards issues in the middle east *

The salt from the dead sea burns my eyes,
and clouds of dust obscure the hills.
Why have we come here to swim,
you know how painfully it kills?
The carnage wreaks and I only see its reflection, it is absurd.
I've decided as of today the wringing is to tedious.
I'll never return to this shore.
I'm done! I swear I am.
I don't want to feel this sticky venom anymore.
Pictures and stories please leave me alone
you've nestled inside of me, by the thousands.
Honing your bitter teeth against my heart.
Someone help! I can feel them crawling and clipping me apart.
Your pleasure only comes from the fight,
and tearing of my organs,
an ecstasy you've invested all of your pride in.
You lot cause every cell to twitch; look at my skin!
It crystallizes and breaks, my blood is brine.
Curses on you paladin,
and on you losers too!
I want nothing to do with any of you,
but the door is locked and there's no key,
only black gook that will not dilate.
Those marching steps are so distant,
but it doesn't matter my body has already changed in state.
I am a pillar of salt now and must crawl back into the dead sea –
my only solicitor, my only hell still willing to hear a plea.
Don't listen to them my beautiful saline mother, listen to me.
Concentrate all of your particles of hate,
and burn a hole through the earth,
only ceasing once everything is desiccated and free.
8 Circles at Night

*A Description of the nightlife in Amman*

I've been sitting on this cluttered roof for hours now just staring at the sky, but the apathy is slowly draining from my veins. Every minute closer to the suns setting brings about renewed vigor, like little droplets racing through a dipping bird.

I can finally stretch my arms and smile, there is but a few moments now until I take flight with my yellow wings. There are so many to choose from in this heap of lost and forgotten faculties. Occasionally, I must sift through to find a working pair, but the first try usually work out just fine, and they have. In the clasp of bedazzled darkness, romantic breezes relax my intrinsic American knots. I can only remember feeling so at ease in a life long before this one.

Why did I always walk so quickly before? To evade the melody of the oud that aggrandizes the air, the sardoodledom of a windows potluck, the sweet sent of hazy hearts? Were these the concerns I sought to ignore?

Of course not, things kiss with less tenderness on the sidewalks I have been accustomed to. But all that is behind me now. This is a different life, a different plane in which time elapses more slowly, and we can all fill our lungs with the shisha fumes of a broken stem, anointed with the assurance of triviality.

My languid contacts suite me well, its a shame I'd be remiss not to return them.
On Haggling

*A poem on my experience with haggling*

Oh no I've done it again. This horrid witch has coned me.
I just wish there were price tags on things.
How am I suppose to know how to haggle.
After all I am a naive American.
It doesn't help that I don't mind spending money,
but they don't appreciate my business here,
they only seek to take advantage and out wit.
You all are not clever though,
binding yourself to this heat for a quick robbery.
Sure, you made me feel foolish,
but now I've hardened my sympathies to your plight,
and future charities are no longer viable to you.
Shopping is suppose to be fun,
but for a person unaccustomed to the art
there is only remorse and a feeling of betrayal.
Where is my smile and come again,
instead all I see is a reptilian tongue poking from an impish grin.
I suppose I'm too kind, but is it such a crime
that I don't like to think when I spend.
Shopping is suppose to be fun.
I'm not really sure what I'm suppose to be feeling, something profound surely, but the rocks all look similar. They are wonderful indeed, but I've seen too many, and I just want to see something green. Stop being so unappreciative, those carvings are something to marvel at. I know and I do, yet I'm also tired and hot. Its surreal that people actually worked so hard in this heat! Ok enough, this is beautiful, see how those tombs open up every morning and dry there dusty spirits in the sun, yes, lovely but no time to say hello, they are a bit too far back for us to visit. Well what about the night floor, it flickers and sings and serves tea, and is dark and cool and makes me sleepy. At least the animals are nice, the dogs' lice do amazing acrobatics, and the camels give kisses, a little too much teeth but its the thought that counts, and the horses are great mimes, they capture the exhaustion in my eyes perfectly. Yes, totally worth it, and I’m not just saying that because its a requirement.