



# Ata Hindi

*Ata Hindi works in the fields of international law and human rights, with a focus on Palestine, and writes poetry. His poems can be found at <https://theshadesofolive.wordpress.com/>.*

## **Martyr**

Your soul is heavy, and our arms,  
tired, but we carry on, over our  
shoulders,  
we carry it to the angels,  
before it parts ways with your touch,  
so we must go on...

With the cracks in our skin,  
your features may blur, we may forget  
the tone  
of your skin, your hair, your eyes, when  
we remember...

...but your legend remains with us  
forever...

## **Return**

Chin up, raise your head high like  
they told you, during the key display,  
hanging  
each one of them pressed up  
against the other like romance, from  
the battered up, worn out folds, tell  
them, tell them like they did, tell  
them...

"I am from here"...

Tell them, do not resist  
your own resistance, tell  
them, "this soil is mine like theirs," that  
the spirits have driven your own  
hands —  
yes, you are a monster —

a savage —  
you are possessed —  
if your tongue, your name,  
your tone, bring them fear, well so be  
it, raise your head high like the key display and  
let them be afraid, when you tell them  
"I am from here"...

Do not let the doves fool you like the hawk's prey, there  
is no shame in your love sewn into your checkered  
scarf that runs forever —

Tell them — "this is my home...your square hands, could  
not have built these beautiful arches"...

Tell them — "this is my home...  
and I am from here"...

## **To the Edge of the World**

"Come," she says...  
"...take my hand, we will ride to the edge of the world, hold  
my hand once more..."  
Who wouldn't oblige, to the requests of angels?  
She takes me, floating over the shores,  
vertically into the skies, higher, skimming the feather clouds  
with the tips of our fingers,  
"hold on, hold on just a bit longer, we have not reached  
there yet..."  
"wrap your fingers in mine and ride with me, to the edge  
of the world..."  
Who would refuse a sunset over chilled seas?  
Who would decline a first sight of constellations that one  
has only heard about?  
I wrap my fingers in hers, she takes me flying between the  
stars,  
vertically into the seas, lower, tracing the sea beds with the  
tips of our toes,  
"Just a little more time," I say, "let's not go there, it is too  
close..."  
It is too close...  
I take her hand, she makes circles out of lines,  
taking me along,  
and I respectfully oblige, to her two moons...  
She draws hearts on her maps, I color them in, connecting  
them in our tracks,  
"we are almost there," she says with her paradise,  
"we are almost there...take my hand and we will ride to the  
edge of the world..."  
I wrap my fingers in hers, read the stories in the lines of  
her hands,  
and recite poems with my fingertips,  
to hide under the memories of her skin...



The world is round...the world is round...  
perhaps, I must let go, but I will find my way around,  
and ask her to hold my hand, so that I can take her to the edge of the world...



### **We Were Always Doves**

...here we are, my love...  
two doves, time has come to take flight,  
for the sun, for the eternities of lights  
about the pillow-clouds,  
to quench our thirst for unlimited sunsets...

...we have flown over oceans and skyscrapers,  
gliding endlessly over the moon,  
never question, neither the hourglass  
nor the calendars...  
never once...

...we were always doves  
with our backs against the blue skies,  
our wings over the straw-clouds,  
over the roses, tulips and lilies,  
that stretch lifetimes...

...before we part for different sunsets  
I beg of you to let me fly once again...  
I beg of you...  
My love,  
My dove.

### **Aleppo**

The devils came through here, and stopped by the young boy...  
They took his makeshift ball and told him — this is no more.  
Where are your loved ones, your caregivers? they asked.  
I wished them good night, last winter. They are playing in the snow.

...why did you come? asked the boy.  
To make way, because he is coming, they said.  
...who is coming? asked the boy.  
He who let you breathe, they responded. Are you not grateful?  
...but God gave me breath, said the boy.  
Yes, this is true, but he let you use it...he let you breathe.  
Just like he let you play with your ball.

...and who is he, asked the boy.  
You will know when he comes, they responded  
...we separated the souls from the bodies,  
so that they may dance in the sky and make it grey for him  
...we made this into ruins, and turned your paradise into hell,  
so that he feels welcome upon his arrival

*Artwork by Maysara Baroud, courtesy of Bank of Palestine.*