



Anas Alaili

Born in Qalqilya, Palestine, Anas Alaili currently lives in Paris, where he received a PhD in French literature in 2016. His first collection of poetry, titled *Ma' Fariq Bassit (With a Slight Difference)*, was published in 2006 by Fada'at Publishing House in Amman. In 2009 it was translated and published in French with an introduction by the well-known French poet Bernard Noël, and in 2012, the collection won the Journées Brautigan Award. In 2016, Alaili's collection of poems in Arabic and French titled *'Anaqat Muta'akhira (Late Embraces)* was published by the French Publishing House L'Harmattan.

Alaili's poems have been presented in theaters, libraries, and cultural centers throughout France; a number of them have been set to music and performed at l'Institute du monde arabe in Paris and at various art centers in Ramallah.

In 2004, Alaili participated in the Literature Festival of Lodève in southern France. Presently, Alaili is the director of Interludes Poétiques de Palestine, a festival that is organized every year in Paris.

Alaili defines his artistic identity as follows: "I belong to the generation of Palestinian poets who discovered their voice in the mid-1990s. The form and concept of prose poetry is my preferred technical and aesthetic medium of poetic expression. My early poetry reflected a deep concern about my country and its image. However, the political events over the past years have been a major and constant source of disappointment, and thus I have developed a more introverted attitude and engaged in a more cautious dialogue with the world that surrounds me – a dialogue that is full of contradictions due to the varied experiences that I, like many other poets, have gone through. Being metaphorically and physically distant from my homeland, the country has become one theme among many in a fertile field for poetic expression. Moreover, working out the elements and construction of a poem has become pivotal in my poetry writing, and the process repeats itself with every new poem."

Bernard Noël wrote in his introduction to Alaili's *Ma' fariq Bassit*: "A poem is a place for transformation and exploration, and this is true for Alaili's collection, where each and every poem aspires to these goals. The poems are spontaneous and simple; reality is constantly transformed and recreated in a tone that is characterized by irony. The short poems and the frugality of their words, as well as the space on the page around each poem provide ample space for thought, while the floating lightness and transparency become heavyweight stimulants for trouble."

Translated from Arabic by Sammy Kirreh.

Portrait

Nude on a mural
Nude from paper
Nude from nobody
Yesterday she trembled
from a passing shell
She stepped out of
her portrait
with her docile breasts
and white fingers...

Another shell
and the nude shall jump into my bed!

From the collection *With a Slight Difference*.

Artwork by Hosni Radwan, courtesy of Bank of Palestine.



A Long Awaited Excursion

A quarrel between two lovers
standing at a distance from each other
Ready for a sudden attack
or probably they are about to depart
for ever

It is a pity that this separation happens
during the winter holidays

During a long awaited excursion
Yet it has become a daily event
happening in many romantic places:
close to a river
in gardens
and around sculptures in plazas

Squinted faces
wavering hands
pleadings and muted cries

Or perhaps they are looking for a new misunderstanding
that which will renew their love
a quarrel as such
often ends with an embrace !

From the collection *Delayed Embraces* (Lyon 2015).
Poems translated from Arabic by Hadeel Karkar.

Artwork by Khaled Hourani.

