

# Poets of the Resistance

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In the last issue of *Democratic Palestine*, we printed a selection by Emil Tuma on the Palestinian Arab cultural movement in the Zionist state. Tuma noted that: «Several good poets have emerged with poems that harmonize revolutionary contents with an original form.» Outstanding among them are those who came to be known as the Poets of the Resistance, especially Tawfiq Zayyad, Samih Al Qasem

and Mahmoud Darwish. Here we print some poems that are representative of this trend.

Samih Al Qasem's «The Land After I Had Gone» reflects the focus on the land, whereby it rises from being mere soil to stand as a symbol of the Palestinian cause itself.

Tawfiq Zayyad's «The Coming Day» expresses the persistent optimism of the Palestinian people and their conviction

in the inevitability of liberation, despite decades of oppression.

In «The Path Has Risen,» Mahmoud Darwish pays tribute to the distinguished Palestinian poet, Muin Bseiso, who died in January 1984. At the same time, Darwish's poem brings out the universal aspect of the Palestinian cause. (For reasons of space, we print only the first verse.)

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## The Land After I Had Gone

by Samih Al Qasem

A day after my green youth  
was engraved on marble tomb  
my heart said - excuse me,  
marble tomb  
will a stronger knight be  
victorious,  
after I have gone?  
If he becomes the 'lover'  
I am a memory  
then completely forgotten.

My land which, with my  
ancestors' bones,  
I ploughed  
It intermingled with my sons  
my land, to which I showed my  
love  
and cared for its fruit all my life  
my land which...  
Is he the lover,  
I am a memory  
and then completely forgotten

Oh, our everlasting home  
oh, our temple-home  
upon its doorsteps I kneel  
and smell the perfume of the  
shoes of its builder  
oh, the door to my home  
opened to houses all over the  
world  
of my attic  
the cradle of the first word I  
sang  
you are witness to my  
affection  
you, when his hands grab its  
fruit  
you, my sole shelter  
Is he the beloved  
am I a memory  
then completely forgotten

who put boulders on plains,  
who watched the stars?  
who taught the breeze to blow  
softly on gardens?  
who... but only the good  
generous heart of my grandfather

who made the fields bountiful?  
who but my old uncle and father  
who watched for nests in our  
ancient olive trees?  
who engraved the names of relatives,  
one after another,  
on each branch of all our vines,  
only this blessed lover?

Is he the lover  
Am I a memory  
and completely forgotten?  
Oh the most beautiful beats of  
my heart  
oh with which I enjoyed love  
Am I made wretched through hatred?  
Answer your son,  
your misfortunate son  
oh land?

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## The Path Has Risen

by Mahmoud Darwish

How many deaths must you die?  
In how many languages must you make mistakes  
Before you arrive?  
The path has risen against the path  
And our steps have taken many directions.  
The hero's dead,  
Long live the mountain!  
How many times, for your sake and mine,  
Must you raise two tents on the shores?  
How often must you come into the kingdom of violets,  
Only to find no violets there?

Do not use my eyes to cry, but lift me  
So I may carry the weapons of the dream  
Stained with a blood that calls our name  
And leads us - I don't know where.  
No. We have not found a river to take  
Save this one. Let's go with it then.  
Cities appear, and disappear in us,  
While from our hand to our blood-  
A horizon that cannot be fenced in  
Except with the boxthorn of childhood.  
How much have we seen? How often  
In the four winds have we seen  
Cities approach, in which we disappear,  
Only to emerge like hostages when hope betrays us?  
The hero's dead,  
Long live the mountain!