

MOHAMED FAILALI



BIO

THORNY PATH

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Be as best you can!

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Thorny Path

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I had the blessed chance to open my eyes on the clean nature and spend my golden age by my grand-mother, who gave me those first gems of life such are faith and patience.

We were my mother and I crossing a cemetery to reach my grand-parents' house. Located on a hill called AGHIL – pronounced ARIL in French - in local dialect, it offers a nice view of both the Mediterranean Sea and the Rif mountains. I heard a dove sing. I asked my mother what the bird said. She told me a folkloric song.



My grand-mother used to exclaim at footballers: why do not they give them a ball each so that they stop fighting for one? She loved it when the bull won the *Corrida*!

In a lost village among the hills, surrounded by the Rif Mountains in the north of Morocco, in the mid forties of the twentieth century, lived my grandparents. My mother was a child when she had her life's worst experience. She was playing with her straw toy one night. My grandfather was absent. My grandmother was praying. My uncle, only a baby of eight months, was sleeping by my mother. Suddenly a ghost appeared. The baby was crying. My mother looked at the stranger strangling the baby, covered her eyes with her hands and, then, cried. The monster's face was half black half white, with wide-open eyes. My grandmother hurried to save her children. The ghost ascended leaving the baby dead. My mother could see the tree outside through the wall.

The next morning, when my grand-father came back home, the baby had already been buried. He cried bitterly.

My mother often told me about ghosts, but this story was the only one I never forgot. Imagine what power could annul the wall presence to let the child

see a tree she used to go out to see. Till the very day she died and, whenever she lost consciousness, my mother cited ghosts' names and strange reminiscences. The most she feared was the one who killed her little brother. My grandmother never had boys!

All I can infer is that we are not but ghosts and remote past. Prepare yourself for the real life!

Like my parents, she had a short and painful existence. Unlike my grand-father who lived 100! But, in the end it is still a short existence!



This could be my first photo. Since then, so many things happened: so many people left, so many others came! Even if I knew when I am due to leave, I am sure I will not be on time! Now that the departure is near, I

hope I will be able to leave a clear and sincere message before I die.

Hope

Looking desperately at the sky

Not, at all, aiming high,

A Muslim refugee

Wonders: where to flee?

A child of not more than five

Obliged to keep hope alive

In the face of so many dangers:

Mines, missiles, hunger and vultures.

O lost son! I am so sorry

I could not calm your worry.

Saturday, October, 13, 2001

The kind of childhood I had explains the worry I feel towards children all over the world. They deserve a better life: mainly good education, not just food!

I always felt as though I was a passing ghost on earth. I do not believe in ghosts but the very living humans awaiting death. Life on earth is hard. Do not ever expect it to soften!

Those first years of my life, I can hardly remember, stamped my whole existence with their natural taste and flavor.

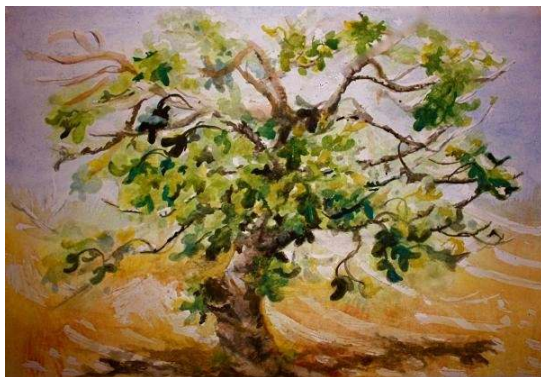


In a Mediterranean nature like this, green fields, poppies, fig-trees, grazing goats...

One day, the neighbor's daughters climbed a tree and threw the fruits on a towel they lay

between my legs. I sat under the tree. I loved the berries, especially the black ones.

There was a big old fig-tree in the middle.



My grand-mother tied a tree-swing to one of its branches. As she told me frightening tales about wolves, I swung for some time and, then, ran away home. There might be a wolf!



I asked her once to tie a goat for me. But, the animal, accustomed to freedom, forced me to set it free. I cried as my pride was hurt. At least, I learnt what freedom meant. Precious lessons one cannot learn in front of a machine nowadays!



A child

Sighing winds

Whispering trees

Flapping wings

Yawning sun

Country mornings

Awaiting fun

A child running

After a butterfly

His cries rising

High in the sky

Green meadows

Swarming with bees

Pasturing cows

Mourning doves

Near old ladies

Remembering loves

That became stories

And the mad child

After his fairies

Still running wild

Tuesday, March, 13, 2001

How to survive...?

Children must be taught to survive not only catastrophes and wars, but also every kind of fatal temptation such as drugs and prostitution.

Dog's life

*A child and a dog,
Both lost in the smog,
Sharing almost everything,
Bed, meal and ceiling,
Wandering in the night
Out of people's sight
To fall asleep anywhere,
With no cover but their hair.
A dog and a child, together,
Live, survive and suffer
Under the cold of winter.
But people seem colder
When seeing both creatures
That show strange features,
They go on walking
As if it were nothing.*

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

I never stopped worrying about children. This poem reflects the bitter reality of city life most of us wink at. Selfishness is the rule! That is why I prefer the country, where people still keep those warm feelings of sympathy and care. In this blessed environment exactly, I learnt how to survive the false appeal of modern civilization. While drinking and smoking are prehistoric deeds, some pretend they are the emblem of modernity. I hate movies advertizing freely both tobacco and alcohol: two devastating killers indeed! Nowadays, more and more children smoke tobacco and drink alcohol. Thus becoming easy preys to violence. It aches and it takes a long time to heal!

To be continued...