

bhater mondo

for my mother

my mother used to make little rice balls
for me. she steamed and clattered about the
cramped mustard kitchen, filling a pot with
water, swelling and salting and singing
the grains, plating them like planets longing
for some lost centre, chirping, *my mother,*
o, she made me small small bhater mondo

one morning away from ringing school bells
in fourteen perfect globular mouthfuls
she fed me her story, and uncooked dreams.
and although my fingers cannot craft rice
they do cling stickily to the grain
of history, ever remembering *le monde*—
the world of sacrifice between her hands.

– 32nd parallel –

on roots

prayer for charleston	1	2	al-jalameh's orange trees
in four directions let the body move a hand	a dove		if a farmer weeps, he weeps for three days—his heart uprooted from between his lungs
			roots and branches, leaves and blossoms, pulled like scarves from between his lungs
in four directions let the body move a hand	a dove		if the blossoms shake, a bee knocked from a blossom—his tufted bee body yellow with pollen, the pollen that leapt to be among his branching hairs
			if the bee is knocked, he flees, exiled—his hind leg heaving a basket of pollen
in four directions let the body move a hand	a dove		if the pollen is heaved, it is the last harvest—the harvest of memory, the harvest of song

– 31st parallel –

for the dead and the living

bird & fish world, gaza strip	1	2	al-faraheen, gaza strip
shrapnel sears/ steel crows			after the disturbance, i gather the small masses; fists forcing out new purpose and cupping it like a baby bird
and mr. al-draimli's cats have ears soft as rose petals—and pink!			the machines raze bullishly but what of diesel, debris, and dust? i gather
good for ages four & up (esp. in cases of fear & fright) telephone 2860098			wheatdust, water: i'll show you i'll show you hope in a handful of dust
or visit downtown al-wahdah street			the way stars exploded offer up new stars, my day's worth rises
they mew. they eat. they some days look away from you with drawn faces, as men in wrinkled shirts without cigarettes or much hope			my village queues and unshakels herself, receives joyful; then
stones thrown are stars that lend no light but mr. al-draimli's cats have eyes—glittering black moons			dry soil tautens to a foot drum no night too aloof to witness
nine times over, they will live their lives in these cages, i think mr. al-draimli's cats			the processional of proud hands each pair lifting ten suns