

À la Clinique by Raad Kareem Abd-Aun

It is Friday morning. I was getting ready
To take my wife to the gynecologist
The taxi took us there amid crowded streets

And threats of twelve car bombs lurking in the town
(Mortar shells and Katyusha missiles falling on Kadhimiyyah
To free jailed terrorists and car bombs exploding in Karrada)

As I was waiting outside the clinic in the listless
Multi-level building the secretary office was crowded
With women I saw a child – a girl carrying her brother

He was almost half her height
She carried him in her arms
Cuddling and kissing him. He was laughing

His back was bruised, his hair was cut short
And uneven it was clear
There was something wrong with him

She was going in and out the secretary office
Of the neurologist her brother in her arms
Wearing dirty old clothes her hair dirty and uneven

She sat on the stairs her brother put his bare foot on the step
She took his foot turned upwards brushed it with her hand
And then started licking her finger and wiping his foot

Her innocence striking her simplicity even more
She took a bottle of water left on one of the steps
And gave it to her brother to play with he chewed on it

Groping for the bottom I realized he was blind his limbs unnatural
Their poverty was very clear and their simple upbringing even clearer
I feel helpless and curse Iraqi politicians past and present

Raad Kareem Abd-Aun, born in Babylon, Iraq, in 1976, holds a PhD in English Literature. He writes poetry since 1995 and considers it, second to his family, the food of his spirit. Some of his poems were published in print and electronic journals. He currently works at the University of Babylon dividing his time between teaching English Literature, academic, and creative writing.

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CLRI is published in two editions (1) online quarterly (eISSN 2394-6075) (2) print annually (ISSN 2250-3366).

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