

I paid my privilege for a ticket, hopeful

By Nora Lester Murad

I paid my privilege for a ticket, hopeful
that from 35,000
reality would shine blue and green,
not red and viscous.

I sought days without tach-tach,
nights free of children crying “auntie”
from a freezing caravan
under a GRM-enabled sign: Human
Appeal UK.

Isn't escape sometimes justified?
I recline, press “new releases” on my
private screen
noting
that my compassion excludes
those who self-medicate with berry-
flavored *argila*
at the cost of a chicken dinner for a
family in Rafah.

Hypocrite. And naïve!
Return renewed? Ha!
If not to the physical front lines where
kafiyas meet tear gas,
then to the psychic front lines where
adrenalin meets exhaustion.

From which store in Manara Square
does one buy renewal? In what
currency is it sold?
Chicago, Yarmouk, Lesbos, Shuhada
Street – there are too many fronts, too
many fronts.

I realize now that I sought solace in
a place
that is no more
or that only existed
in the imagination
of a white,
American,

child
in a racist world.
I realize now that I have returned to
a place
that no longer exists
or perhaps only existed
in the fantasy of a foolish,
entitled,
optimist.

Hope is a fickle lover. It entices with
curly hair tossed with fearlessness.
Then it crumbles
into *fet-a-feat* when you can't attend the
funeral of Israel's martyr *du jour*
because you can't, because you just
can't, because you really just can't.

The Intifada was pre-paid on a card
bought in 10 shekel coins at the Jawwal
kiosk,
but that does not mean we were
prepared for the lights to go out.
In the dark, strategic options are
obscure,
so,
shall we meet to discuss at that old café
where the wi-fi is strong?

Nora Lester Murad, PhD, is a writer who lives in Jerusalem, Palestine. Her non-fiction has appeared in The Guardian, Al Jazeera, Mondoweiss, OpenDemocracy, and Al-Adab, among others, and on her blog, The View from My Window in Palestine, at www.noralestermurad.com. She is a co-founder of Dalia Association (www.dalia.ps) and Aid Watch Palestine (www.aidwatch.ps), and tweets from @NoraInPalestine.