

Translation Workshop

Translation Exercise (1)

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The Mood of Rain

(P 3)

The deliberate, monotonous drumming of the water and the heavy downpours were interspersed with pauses, space for the sky to catch its breath and gather new, watery energy. But the bubbling rain was an established fact, as continuous as if it were eternal.

Translation Exercise (2)
=====**Rain of Love and an Innuendo****(P 239)**

That night, Hawwa's thoughts roamed free. She relaxed her hand next to her face, resting on the pillow, and Munir's hand fell over it, like the first rains of spring. A smell arose from it, the smell of the clay of a thirsty body, of a dusty soul. She wished for his hand as a fine mist, a continuous, soaking rain. Then, when her hand had been watered, she sought more water, and abundant rain poured down, welling from all the clouds. When Hawwa closed her eyes at last, her soul, not dried into a desert, had been watered by the perfume of heaven. When she awoke in the morning, the buds of lilies opened dewy and alive in her heart, while delayed lilacs accumulated in her paths.

Translation Exercise (3)

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Glow of Senses: All These Colours!**(P 19)**

Hawwa moves on, giving herself to the hopeful December morning. In some spot deep inside she feels happiness, just as she feels that she loves this wintery morning without needing any reason to love it. With her eyes she sweeps the iron doors of houses, painted with cheap, immoderate, unruly colors, breaking the monotony of the gray surroundings, the walls and the streets: green with the vigor of *muloukhiya* when the leaves are first picked, edged in cream; mustard yellow with a frame of black; rust red with an apricot-colored lattice for two small windows above the door; and sky blue with an arabesque design in pistachio; and amber with edges gilded boorishly, as befits the aesthetic aridity of the place. Hawwa contemplates windows cracked open enough to allow the nectar of the day to creep into rooms still shaking off the slackness of sleep. Her gaze passes over the haphazard maps of Palestine, drawn with red spray paint, like spots of blood plastered on the walls, and the words “Long Live Palestine!” and “Gaza Resists!” next to drawings of hearts of various sizes and colors, with arrows piercing them, some of them crooked.

Translation Exercise (4)

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Glow of Senses: A Smell Unlike Any Other**(P 33)**

Velvet has an aroma unlike any other; that's what Sitt Qamar used to tell her. It's the aroma of warmth, of dormant heat, of depth and expanse; it's the aroma of well-deserved luxury, of pride and restraint; it's the aroma of wishes and desires, of maturity, maturity of love and of age; it's the aroma of clean flesh, of flesh suffused with yearnings and the sweat of lust. But not just any velvet—only plush velvet, velvet in which the most expensive silk blazes; velvet with a closely packed, draping softness that resists pleating; velvet with a hidden flare in the fabric, with a changing, subdued mix of color, with a faint light, a pervasive sheen; velvet with an intimate timidity over the folds of the body, with a touch that emits a rustle, a rustle that does not startle yearning.