

Karolina Grzywnowicz

Bedtime

Sleep in Resistance
Paweł Mościcki

These songs come from the very eye of the storm. Aida, Dheisheh, Fawwar, al-Arroub, Balata, Jalazone, Qalandiya – those are the Palestinian camps where they were recorded. The first two are at the top of the list of places in the world with the highest concentration of tear gas in the air. All share – besides the ethnicity of their residents – the experience of a permanent state of siege and ever new forms of harassment invented by the Israeli authorities. These songs can be heard in places of brutal – and actually double – oppression, for historical violence (the Naqba), which has forced thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes, overlaps here with actual violence, directed against the refugees who live in the camps. As if it weren't enough to drive the people out of the country, but to drive the country out of the people as well. To disconnect them from their own culture, strip them of their civil rights, and then to make their life untenable.

In the streets of the camps, overt violence against and unjustified arrests, not only of adults but of kids as well, are a daily occurrence, while at night Israeli commandos carry out home searches under the pretext of anti-terrorist operations, fire at alleged militant positions, and disturb the silence. Sleep deprivation, a torture method used by intelligence services all over the world, is employed here against whole neighborhoods. As in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Guantanamo, the purpose is to keep the subjugated populace in a state of constant agitation, to keep their minds occupied, to never let them forget about their humiliation. Dream deprivation is also a way of cutting off the targets from the realm of regeneration and relaxation, of refusing the terrorized people a chance to let their imagination fly. It is not enough to occupy a territory: the refugees also need to be refused access to soothing oblivion, to an inner emigration that could at least partly alleviate the pain of the physical one.

In those places, Karolina Grzywnowicz has recorded lullabies sung by residents (usually women) in spite

of two techniques of power: cultural uprooting and sleep deprivation. Quiet and tender, these songs are also acts of subversion and resistance for which one can be punished. The compilation includes songs from different regions and periods: some are recent, some traditional, and some a creative mix of the two. Protest is not only inscribed here in the very fact of their being sung, but also encoded in their recurring motifs. A ballad about separation from a loved one speaks of nostalgia for the homeland, a children's rhyme turns into a political pamphlet, streaked with references to the current situation in the region. Sometimes these songs adopt the form of a parable, at other times they wish the children being lulled to sleep a better future than the reality that surrounds them at present.

Listening to these recordings, one can clearly feel that the lullabies are neither separate from reality, nor can they be reduced to an object of consumption. This can be heard when they blend smoothly with fragments of conversation, or trail off when memory has failed the singer and he or she makes a break to discuss the next stanza. This joint searching for fragments of tradition dispersed in memories is the very core of resistance; it is the actual political statement of these modest singers. It is here that the firmest *no pasarán* is declared, one that seems to render all the drones, stun grenades, and tear gas ineffective. The power of a tender collectivity making sure that the youngest ones sleep tight is irresistible indeed.

Perhaps, in order to ensure the survival of a community, it is first necessary to protect its flickering existence, woven with dreams, fantasies, and memories, suspended between dream and reality, between the past and the present, in a realm where Palestine simply still exists. Falling asleep, one can persist precisely in staunchest resistance, regaining one's strength for further struggle, even if it is to preserve one's ordinary, everyday dignity.

As we know, the Palestinian camps expand only upwards, with the roofs of existing buildings constantly turning into the floors of new storeys. Such is the fate of those who, year after year, piece by piece, are being stripped of the part of their homeland that has been left to them. But on each successive floor this homeland's hidden anthem resounds, sung as a lullaby. How many more floors must be built for the world to truly hear the cry that these songs convey?

Yalla tnam

يلا تنام

Come now, Reema, and sleep. Come now, sleep, come to Reema
Come now, love the praying. Come now, love the fasting.
Come now to Reema, good health, each and every day

يلا تنام ريما، يلا ييجيها النوم
يلا تحب الصلاة، يلا تحب الصوم
يلا تيجيها العوافي، كل يوم بيوم

Come now, sleep; come now, sleep
I'll slaughter pigeons for her,
Go away, o, pigeons: don't believe what I say
I'm tricking Reema to get her to sleep

يلا تنام، يلا تنام،
لادبعلها طير الحمام
روح يا حمام لا تصدق
بضحك ع ريما ت تنام

Reema, Reema, you bright kid
Your hair is blond and pure
He who loves you will kiss you
He who despises you will gain nothing

ريما ريما الحندقة
شعرك أشقر ومنقى
اللي حبك بيوسك
اللي بغضك شو بيترقى

O, seller of grapes
Tell my mother; tell my father
The gypsies have kidnapped me from under Majdaliyyi's tent

يا بياع العنب والعنبيّة
قولوا لإمي، قولوا لبيّي
خطفوني العجر، من تحت خيمة مجدليّة

O, cutie pie, o, cutie pie; peaches under apricots
Every time the wind blows, I pick an apricot for Reema

التشنتشة والتشنتشة، والخوخ تحت المشمشة
كل ما هبّ الهوا، بقطف لريما مشمشة

Hey, hey, hey, Lina; lend us your tub and basin
So we can wash Reema's clothes, and hang them over the jasmine bush

هيه هيه هيه لينا، دستك لكنك عيرينا
ت نغسل ثياب ريما، وننشرهن ع الياسمينية

Singing

Tohfa Abo Ebyea with her daughter Dima

Place and date

Balata Refugee Camp, Nablus, Palestine
29/06/2019

Yalla tnam is the most renowned lullaby in Palestine, allegedly in the entire Arab region. It was popularized after Fairuz, the legendary Lebanese singer, sang it for her daughter Reema in the film *Bint Al Hariss*. The piece originally comes from Palestine.

Tohfa Abo Ebyea is an Arabic teacher and a refugee living in Balata, the largest refugee camp in the West Bank. Tohfa is a wonderful, generous person, and a strong voice of the Balata camp. We recorded many songs, including the lullaby *Yalla tnam*, with which she sang her children to sleep. This time she sang it with her daughter Dima.

Time

1:52

Palestinian Samer

She appeared on the high porch without a veil
And her face, my sisters, lit up like a lamp

She appeared on the high porch with her lamp
And smiled and laughed, with her father by her side

Take your sheep in, girl, your face is cold
We, the foreigners, will let our sheep graze and repeat

Don't think the distance made me forget the way to my folks
I shall mount the steed and ride slowly

He passed by the neighborhood, with the pretext of playing ball
No ball did we play, nor did the loved one open the door for him

He passed by our doors, with the pretext of buying oil
No oil did he buy, nor did the loved one open the door for him

May God help those white folks flocking to the valley
Her daughters have come to hunt my horses

May God help those white folks flocking with friends
Like a pack of slaves who have come to divide up the harvest

O family of this little girl, may God not forgive you any sins
What made you blind to the son of the uncle and aunt?

O family of this little girl, may God not alleviate any of your hardships
What made you blind to this smart cousin?

The day I can mount my homeland on camelback
I shall leave and go wherever you are, you peaceful people

السامر الفلسطيني

طلّت من الرّوشن العالِي بلا مندِيل
يا وجهها يو خواتي يضيوي كما القندِيل

طلّت من الرّوشن العالِي بمصباحهوَ
واتبسّمت بالضّحك وابهوا معهوَ

يا بنت ضبّي غنمك وصدغك بارِد
واحنا الغريبين نرعى العشب ونعاود

لا تحسبوا البعد نسانِي طريق أهلي
لا ركب على الهيجن واندرج على مهلي

مرق من الحارة تحجج بلعب الطّاب
لا طاب لعينو ولا المحبوب فتح ليه الباب

مرق من بوابنا، تحجج بشري الزّيت
لا زيت شرينو ولا المحبوب فتح ليه الباب

الله مع البيض والنطاحين على الوادي
بناتها مرّوا واجين صايدات لجوادي

الله مع البيض والنطاحين مع الخلة
سربة مماليك واجين يقسموا الغلة

يا أهل البنيوت لا بيريلكو ذمة
شو اللّي عماكو عن ابن العم والعمّة؟

يا أهل البنيوت لا بيريلكو خاطر
شو اللّي عماكو عن ابن العم هالشاطر؟

ع اليوم لآته الوطن ينشال فوق جمال
لارحل واجي عندكو يا هاديين البال

Singing
Ghada Azzeh

Place and date
Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
13/11/2019

The above verses allude to the traditional style of singing known as the Palestinian *samer*. The two-line stanzas are mostly unrelated; according to the *samer* formula, they refer to diverse issues of social life. Themes include those of love, disappointment, war, death, and the longing for one's home.

Ghada Azzeh is a refugee living in the Aida camp, right next to the separating wall, surrounded by the grim realities of checkpoint 300 between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. In their commute to work Palestinians wait in endless queues every day, crammed into caged corridors. In their occupation, the Israeli army conducts night raids several times a week, searching houses and issuing arrests. This camp is considered to be one of the places in the world most exposed to tear gas.

I recorded with Ghada Azzeh a few times. Our sessions were often interrupted with the sudden arrival of Israeli soldiers, shots and tear gas. Ghada would stop singing, frantically trying to determine if her children were safe. However, during this recording session it was not the appearance of soldiers, but the verses themselves, verses which described a desire by Palestinians to hoist their country on the backs of camels, to carry it to a place where there is peace and safety, that made her unable to continue singing.

Taq, taq, taqiyyih

We were once free in our land
And would play a popular game:
We'd gather around, as little kids,
And play: "hat, hat, hatty"

Hat, hat, hatty
We have no identity (card)
Hat, hat, hatty
The name of the game is America
Hat, hat, hatty
This is what democracy looks like
Hat, hat, we're surrounded
The resolution came but we didn't wake up
And the wall that surrounded us
Took away the West Bank

Hat, hat, hatty
We have no identity (card)
Hat, hat, many hats
We cannot find any bread
They attacked Iraq
And claimed it's for nuclear reasons

Hat, hat, hatty
This is what democracy looks like
Hat, hat, hatty
The name of the game is America
Ring, ring, ring the bell
A dagger stabbed us in the back
They placed a checkpoint and some guards
Around East Jerusalem

Hat, hat, hatty
We have no identity (card)
The Arab states are all convened
All twenty-two of them
They are having soirées in hotels
To western tunes

Our government, my brethren,
Has issued the first statement,
Announcing a price hike
Of one hundred and ninety percent
In percentage: a hundred ninety
They applied it at the beginning of October
The price of sugar and flour went up
And that of all the necessities
Hat, hat, hatty
Now both the worker and the teacher
Claim that life is unsurmountable
The price of both diesel and gas went up
At the onset of winter
Hat, hat, hatty
The merchant is acting all macho
While people are boiling inside
They even raised the price of a dishwashing sponge
By the VAT amount.

Singing Place and date
Abu Nasser Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
09/11/2019

The song is a parody of the popular children's game *Taq, Taq, Taqiyyih*, in which a group of children sits in a circle facing one another. One child, dubbed the Hatter, remains outside the circle and circles around, wearing a hat or other head covering, while the rest of the group sings the song. At a certain point, the Hatter drops their hat on one of the sitting children. The selected child tries to catch the Hatter. If the Hatter manages to occupy the empty place in the circle, the chosen child becomes the new Hatter. The game continues.

Time
1:45

طاق طاق طاقيّة

كنا في بلدنا حرار
ونلعب لعبة شعبية
نتجمع ولاد صغار
ونلعب طاق طاق طاقيّة

طاق طاق طاقيّة
واحنا بلا هويّة X
طاق طاق طاقيّة
اللعبة أمريكية
طاق طاق طاقيّة
هاي الديمقر اطيّة
طاق طاق طوقنا
وصار الحل وما فقنا
والجدار اللي طوقنا
أخذ الضفّة الغربيّة

طاق طاق طاقيّة
واحنا بلا هويّة
طاق طاق طواقي
خبز ما عم بنلاقي
هجموا على العراق
وقالوا حداهم ذرّيّة

طاق طاق طاقيّة
هاي الديمقر اطيّة
طاق طاق طاقيّة
اللعبة أمريكية
رن رن يا جرس
خنجر في ظهورنا انغرس

حطّوا "محسوم" وحرس
على القدس الشرفيّة
طاق طاق طاقيّة
واحنا بلا هويّة
ودول العرب مجتمعين
بيعدّوا اثنين وعشرين
بالفنادق سهرانين
ع الرقصات الغربيّة

حكومتنا يا إخوان
أصدرت أول بيان
وطلع الغلا يا إخوان
مئة وتسعين بالمئة
بالمئة مئة وتسعين
زادوها بأول تشرين
وأغلوا السكر والطحين
والأشياء الضرورية
طاق طاق طاقيّة
وصار العامل والأسنان
يقولوا العيشة ما بنتجاز
وأغلوا الدولار مع الكاز
بأول الشنويّة
طاق طاق طاقيّة
التاجر صار أبو علي
والشعب عم بيغلي علي
حتّى ليفة الجلي
زادوها القيمة الإضافيّة

Abu Nasser is a refugee living in the Dheisheh camp. In his youth he wrote and sang songs during crucial moments in the history of the camp. He sang at weddings and during celebrations, when political prisoners were released from Israeli prisons. For this reason he was oppressed and spent many years under house arrest.

La tibki, tbakkini

Don't cry and make me cry,
Fatima, my sister,
Don't cry and make me cry.

You bruised my cheek
with your absence
You bruised my cheek

O, Rwedeh, Rwedeh
We love you
O, Rwedeh, Rwedeh

You bruised my cheek
With your absence
You bruised my cheek
O, Rwedeh

Singing
Leila Daayna

Place and date
Fawwar Refugee Camp, Palestine
13/11/2019

La tibki, tbakkini is an old Palestinian lullaby made in a traditional manner. It is how women in Palestine sing folk songs, for instance at weddings or during harvest season. As with many Palestinian songs, the theme of this one remembers enforced distance and a longing for loved ones who are far away.

Leila Daayna is from Beit Jibrin and is a refugee living in the Fawwar camp. The song was recorded in Al Madafah, a living room initiated by Saldi Hilal, to which we were invited by the host, refugee and feminist Ayat Al Turshan.

Time
0:59

لا تبكي

لا تبكي، تبكيني
خيتي يا فاطمة
لا تبكي، تبكيني

ع خدي سمطتيني
بغياك عني
ع خدي سمطتيني

يا رويده، رويده
إحنا نحبك
يا رويده، رويده

ع خدي سمطتيني
بفراقك عني
ع خدي سمطتيني
يا رويده

Ala Taree' Aytit

On the road to Aytit, oh, mother
Two people interrupted my prayers
One was my soul's love, oh, mother
And the other, my life.

We tasted torment, oh, mother
We tasted its different flavors
And he who forgets his land, oh, mother
Puts an end to his life

على طريق عيتات

على طريق عيتيت يمّي
قطعوا صلاتي
واحد حبيب الرّوح يمّي
وواحد حياتي

نحننا ذقنا العذاب يمّي
ذقنا حالاته
واللي نسي أرضه يمّي
يعدم حياته

Singing

Tamara Abu Laban

Place and date

Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine

12/11/2019

Aytit is a village in southern Lebanon, to which more than 100 thousand Palestinians escaped in 1948. Today, 453,000 registered Palestinian refugees live in camps across the country.

The song *Ala Taree' Aytit* narrates the life of a girl who lost her brother and her lover in their fight for freedom.

Tamara Abu Leban is a film director, young mother, and refugee living in the Dheisheh camp. She sings the song *Ala Taree' Aytit* to get her children to sleep. The recording was made in the studio at the headquarters of the Shoruk organization, which was created by the refugees, residents of the Dheisheh camp. During the session we repeatedly heard Israeli F16's flying over the camp, on their way to shoot at Gaza, located 60 km away from the camp.

Time

1:00

Safayeh, Safayeh

Safayeh, safayeh
On the prophet's road
Safayeh, safayeh
Exuding fragrance
I bring you, oh, prophet

Safayeh, safayeh
Because you brought your master
Oh camel, oh camel
Because you brought your master
I shall increase your hay
And keep you tied for two months

Because you brought your master
I shall keep you tied for two months
Because you brought this tanned man
I shall keep you tied for two months
Near the green beans

Singing
Ghada Azzeh

Place and date
Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine
12/11/2019

Sfiha (pl. *Safayeh*) is a type of salty pastry.

The song belongs to the genre of *tarwida*. The pieces have diverse themes, they are composed in honor of those who returned from Mecca, of political prisoners leaving Israeli prisons, and for various celebrations. What connects them is a specific melody. The slow rhythm originates from the manner in which these pieces were first performed. The *tarwidat* were sung by women putting their children to sleep.

The lullabies sung by Ghada Azzeh are very old; in her family they were passed down from generation to generation. She inherited these lullabies from her aunt.

Time
1:14

صفايح

صفايح صفايح
يا طريق النبي
صفايح صفايح
بيهبهب روايح
محملك يو نبي

صفايح صفايح
ولان جبت سيدك
يا جمل يو جمل
لان جبت سيدك
لازود عليك
واربطك شهرين

لان جبت سيدك
لاربطك شهرين
لان جبت الاسمر
وع الفول الاخضر
لاربطك شهرين

Hatha waqtu nnawmi, ya ibni

هذا وقت النوم

It is time to sleep, my son
Have a long and blissful sleep
Sleep in the crib of happiness
Oh, happy child
Sleep on this pillow
I wish I were a child again
Oh, little angel in his bed
Sleep in God's care
Sleep, oh angel, sleep, oh love
Sleep in God's care
Sleep until the coming morning
Sleep with blissful eyes
Oh God, keep my loved one safe
during sleep
Oh God, keep my loved one safe
during sleep

هذا وقت النَّوم يا ابني
نم طويلاً في الهناء
نم على مهد السَّعادة
أبها الطَّفل السَّعيد
نم على هذي الوسادة
ليتنني طفل أعود
يا ملاكاً في سرير
نم بحفظ الله واسلم
نم ملاكي نم حبيبي
نم بحفظ الله واسلم
نم إلى الصَّبح القريب
نم قرير العين نم نم
رَبِّنا احفظ لي حبيبي
سالمًا وقت المنام
رَبِّنا احفظ لي حبيبي
سالمًا وقت المنام

Singing
Em Elias

Place and date
Palestine
23/10/1998

The lullaby comes from the Popular Art Center's sound archive.

For years, Palestine has unsuccessfully fought to reclaim its archives from other countries. The whereabouts of many documents, photographs, films, books, newspapers, maps, and manuscripts are unknown. A vast majority are in the possession of Israel, which means the state also controls their accessibility, regulating the ways these materials are used, or otherwise destroying documents as they see fit. Israeli forces plundered extensive archives kept by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in Beirut. Leaving Lebanon, the PLO took the remainder of the archives (containing documentation on the daily life of Palestinians, as well as documents of property deeds from before 1948) to Algeria, and kept them in desert camps, where allegedly a large part of these were further destroyed.

These archives could be a powerful tool in the hands of Palestinians. On the one hand they could serve in an ideological struggle, opposing the Israeli-propagated myth about state-building in a no-man's land

inhabited by nomadic, cultureless barbarians. On the other hand, possessing these documents could serve a very practical dimension, strengthening the individual and public rights of Palestinians under occupation. If they were supported by documents, neither Israel nor anyone else could contest Palestinian claims. Thanks to these archives, Palestinians would be able to prove that they are the rightful owners of houses (including those in Jerusalem and Nablus) and of the lands that have been illegally seized by settlers.

From the outset, the activity of the EI Funoun group and their Popular Art Center was aimed at protecting Palestinian cultural heritage against appropriation and loss. The founders of both organizations recognized the need to document customs and traditional Palestinian culture to strengthen the cultural bond between Palestinians everywhere. Despite it being prohibited, they created an audio archive, recording and collecting traditional Palestinian songs, believing in the crucial role of art and culture to counter the systematic oppression of Palestinian identity by Israeli occupation.

Time
1:48

Yimma, Mwel Lhawa

O, mother, this love ballad,
this love ballad of mine, o mother.
I'd sooner be stabbed with daggers
Than be ruled by a lowlife.

And I walked under the rain,
And the rain quenched my thirst
And when summer came
It lit up my fires
At least my life was redeemed
As a vow to freedom

Singing

Tamara Abu Laban

Place and date

Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine

12/11/2019

It is difficult to determine the origin of this song,
but it is certainly strongly identified with the fate of
Palestinians. Tamara Abu Laban, a refugee living in
the Dheisheh camp, often sings it to get her children to
sleep.

Time

1:09

يَمَّا مَوِيلَ الْهُوَى

يَمَّا مَوِيلَ الْهُوَى
يَمَّا مَوِيلِيَا
ضَرْبِ الْخَنَاجِرِ وَلَا
حُكْمِ النَّذْلِ فِيَا

وَمَشِيَّتِ تَحْتَ الشَّتَا
وَالشَّتَا رَوَانِي
وَالصَّيْفِ لَمَّا أَتَى
وَلَعَّ مِنْ نِيرَانِي
بِيظَلِّ عَمْرِي أَنْفَدَى
نَذَرَ لِلْحَرِيَّةِ