

A poem by E. Shafaq in memory of the political prisoners massacred in the summer of 1988.

Who Are They?

Roots in gunpowder
stems of rage
leaves drenched in wrath
and buds brimming with the explosion of love!

Who are they?
these zealous champions
these valiant commanders
who are roaringly, who are fervently wrestling with death
losing their lives for love
in the backgammon of life!

Who are these magnanimous captives
that even the hanging rope of the vicious executioner
is fearful of them
who are these courageous riders
these fierce night-breakers?

These bravehearts
these lionhearts
are my comrades,

they are the countless tulips on the plains of my native land
they are the innocent blood of my ruined and enchained land

Look well!

Look at the shine on their faces and in their eyes
the champions of Evin and Qasr
the mighty Hercules of Gohardasht
Arash the archer of Dizelabad and Vakilabad
[the messengers of Spring, the red tulips]

Look well!

roots in gunpowder
stems of rage
leaves drenched in wrath
and buds brimming with the explosion of love

It's been a long time now
that in captivity,
that in the dead of night and in the labyrinth of traitors
the army of the righteous
shackled in chains
with bleeding bodies
are mutilated left soaking in their own blood
by the madness of malicious mediocre minds;
the bloodthirsty wild dogs of our times,
as if only through a bloodbath like this

the ruthless rulers are satisfied-

It's been a long time now

that in captivity,

that in the dead of night and in the labyrinth of traitors

the army of the righteous

shackled in chains

bleeding from the daggers of the executioner

bleeding from the firing squad

are writing the poems of conquering tomorrow:

Death to the executioner!

Shame on the enemy!

We are the comforting melody of hundreds of arrows in captivity

that shot right into your ominous heart

from the firm string of the longbow of victory

so as to rebuild the world!

Down with your order,

the people will live on!

With eyes open and with hearts full of hope

from behind bars

they write the poems of that beautiful victory

for the people enchained...

Who are they?

These bravehearts
these lionhearts
are my comrades,
they are the countless tulips on the plains of my native land
they are the innocent blood of my ruined and enchained land
they are firewood burning
they are tulips blooming
roots in gunpowder
stems of rage
leaves drenched in wrath
and buds brimming with the explosion of love
Who are they?

It's been a long time now
every dusk or dawn
manacled with bleeding bodies
they are roaring and from their echo
look well!
from their echo
red tulips are seething and chanting:

O! You the wounded native land
O! You captive in the hands of tyrants
O! You the great ancient myth
the sound of the explosion of your heart reverberating
and we, shackled, fallen on the ground

**we spread the table of triumph
and with your young blood
we cultivated rage all over the plain...**

Our salutation to them!

The people's greeting to them!

To those from whose red gaze, fire
and from whose luminous eyes, arrows volley

Let us remember the legend of those fallen Reds
Let us remember those flames of passion in the battlefield
who fired at the heart of the foe
from the burning barrels of the machine-gun
from the great heart of the hammer
from the sharp blade of the sickle
Let us remember those everlasting stories of resistance...

Our salutation to them!

The people's greeting to them!

Now, all across the vastness of this land
upon the endless graveyards
red tulips are springing up
it has been a long time now
that in captivity
that in the dungeons of the deceitful enemy

tulips have bloomed from the blood of the bravehearts:
roots in gunpowder
stems of rage
leaves drenched in wrath
and buds brimming with the explosion of love
they germinate
they seethe
and they fall onto the ground
yet their living sacred seeds
still wondrous
still militant
remain in the conscience of the soil
with the promise and the anticipation of a new germination
still wondrous
still militant!

Translation by: A. Behrang

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