

## **In Nights of War**

My mother forced us to go to sleep before sunset

She told us

The warning siren will take the sleep from your eyes

Just as the raid will take the houses from their streets

We run toward everything

We eat from fear of running out of food

We drink water without thirst

And like chicks

We crawl into her abaya

And sleep without sleeping

At dawn

We run toward the windows

And open our eyes wide

When we start counting all the destroyed houses around us

And thank God

For the blessing of sleep

## **My Father's Feet**

When I was a kid

I saw them

Running

And

Running

After the bus

That took him to his job every morning

And returned him to us late every day

Carrying so much love in his heart

And bags of food

To our souls and our mouths

Starving forever

Running

After our school books

Which we were covering with our prayers

To protect us from the sticks of our principal and teachers

Running

After my mother

Whose days all finished in different hospitals

And when I grew up a little bit

I saw them

Still running

But in military boots

For days never ending

Covered with dust from Khorramshahr\* and Dezful\*

And when he stretched out his feet on the floor

We all ran to them with joy

And like a big pillow filled with dreams we slept on them

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\*Two Iranian cities where the Iran – Iraq war was signed in 1980

## **War Museum**

Whenever the dictators get bored of their long daytime hours

Which they spend sitting on their stinking chairs

They open the door to their War Museum

And force us to enter

We pay with our lives as a ticket for this entry

To see:

The remains of soldiers we played with in our childhood

A picture of my grandmother

Who, when she saw the oppressor's face

Predicted our orphans would come soon

A Picture of my father's military boot

Which he lost on the border of a city

We thought belonged to us

Maps of cities where.....

There is nothing left but their names

Melted onto the tongues of kids

Women's abayas chewed up by the treads of tanks

Medals who could not find a deserving chest to hang on

Large jars filled with the tears and sorrows of mothers

And

Helmets

Helmets, helmets

Helmets, helmets, helmets

Of unknown soldiers

But.....

On the door of this museum

They put a big red sign

"No Exit"

## **Raising the war**

Like a pet

The tyrants raise the war

At first, they feed it

Their sick dreams

Their reviews of the soldiers under the heat of the summer sun

Maps they have imagined for their conquests

Speeches they have written in dark rooms

The future of our children

And when that war grows

It chews away at us

Every day

Every hour

Every moment

Like a ruminating anima

## **When I Hear the Siren**

I remember

Like birds afraid of their feathers catching fire

We scrambled to hide

Whenever we heard the siren

My little sister's voice hits the walls of the room

She screams

!Hold me

As she stands still in her place

And her eyes sink into a sea of fear

Words break on my tongue

We run towards our mom and we hold her hands tightly

And our whole little world begins shaking from the roars of the fighter planes

Now

I thank the siren a lot

Every time I hear it

It reminds me of the taste of my mother's hands

When she was trying hard to strengthen our thin roots