

Red Sea

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Source:

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This Passover, who reclines?
Only the dead, their cupped hands filling slowly
with the red wine of war. We are not free.

The blood on the doorposts does not protect anyone.
They say that other country over there
dim blue in the twilight
farther than the orange stars exploding over our roofs
is called peace.

The bread of affliction snaps in our hands like bones,
is dust in our mouths. This bitterness brings tears to our eyes.
The figs and apples are sour. We have many more
than four questions. We dip and dip,
salt stinging our fingers.
Unbearable griefs braided into a rope so tight
we can hardly breathe,
Whether we bless or curse,
this is captivity.
We would cross the water if we knew how.
Everyone blames everyone else for barring the way.

Listen, they say there is honey swelling in golden combs, over there,
dates as sweet and brown as lovers' cheekbones,
bread as fragrant as rest,
but the turbulent water will not part for us.
We've lost the trick of it.

Back then, one man's faith opened the way.
He stepped in, we were released, our enemies drowned.

This time we're tied at the ankles.
We cannot cross until we carry each other,
all of us refugees, all of us prophets.
No more taking turns on history's wheel,
trying to collect old debts no-one can pay.
The sea will not open that way.

This time that country
is what we promise each other,
our rage pressed cheek to cheek
until tears flood the space between,
until there are no enemies left,

because this time no one will be left to drown
and all of us must be chosen.
This time it's all of us or none.