



The Cost

Haya Shahzad

many of my close ones know
i speak my truth
by letting my words flow.
w.

poetry is so dense,
yet so gentle;
so vivid and unveiling,
yet so modest and fragile.

i have people believing in me,
and that's all i can ever ask for.
this issue is bigger than all,
and will effect society's core.

i want to share how i feel;
right now.

i present to you my poem:

the cost

a beloved friend of mine reached out
with her love and concern
about my future.
about how my reputation,
and my degree are on the line.

but what is a future
at the cost of my Umma
h's blood.
what is a future
with no freedom for all.
what is a social construc

known as a "degree"
compared to the degree of pain
the palestinian bloodline has endured.

i do this
with the hopes of my Lord protecting, forgiving, and guiding me.
i do this
with the promise to our children of Gaza.
i do this
with the heart of my mother;
with the fearlessness of my father;
with the faith of my brother.
i do this for the voices
of every martyr that was taken
before their time even started.

these are,
in fact,
the children of light.

the “W’s” on my record
are a stain i hope lasts forever.

the stain of these letters
will never compare
to the stain of blood
left on the oppressors hands.

from dropping my socially constructed
courses
at one of the top criminal justice schools in the country,
in hopes of voicing the underdog’s speech,
to the paint on my shirt;
left from making the sign
at the encampments;

these are merely grains of sand

in the quicksand of uproars happening
in today’s dystopian times.

“what if i look crazy.”

my family used to say
“haya doesn’t need a microphone.
her voice...,”
and they didn’t say “loud,”
but they said “heavy.”

“haya’s voice is already heavy.”

and they’re right.
my voice is heavy.

you will feel my weight.
you will feel the ummah’s pressure.

Salam