

Writings About Homeland: Palestinian American Poetry

Authors : Laila Shikaki

Abstract : 'Writings about Home' discusses the poetry of Palestinian American female poets, especially ones who write about their homelands, living away from home, as well as their family ties to the land. This is a paper about poetry, but it is also about Palestinian American women who use English to convey issues pertaining to homesickness, family, and language. She study poems by Naomi Shihab Nye and Natalie Hanal. In 'My Father and the Fig Tree,' for example, Nye depicts her father's life away from Palestine and his attachment to a tree that represents his homeland and nostalgia. Nye's style is diverse and unified, and her attention is to details and images. While her words and imagery are usually simple, they are always rich in meaning. Nathalie Handal's poetry, on the other hand, has a more complicated, multi-layered, and nuanced style as the poet herself lived in many areas and spoke multiple languages. 'Bethlehem,' for instance, depicts her city of origin, recalling her grandfather. Her poem 'Blue Hours' illustrates a persona's difficulty in belonging, switching from one language to the next, and feeling a betrayal in both. This paper pays attention to language and how being bilingual adds another level of exile and pain to those who have fled or were forced to leave Palestine. This paper is very timely as the issue of Palestinian freedom and its right to autonomy and self-determination is the central stage for many Americans, seen in their protests, university encampments, and graduation ceremonies, not forgetting its effect on voters' decisions for president and elected officials.

Keywords : Palestinian American, poetry, homeland, Nye, Handal

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