

My Name is Nadya

Afeif Ismail

*My name is Nadya, listen to my song
What didn't kill me has made me strong*

One night I awoke to laments and screams
At first, I thought I was still in my dreams
But then I saw terror on the face of my father
'Run like the wind!' cried my terrified grandmother

As she ran her fear blew the dust from her years
Above, Antonov planes roared in our ears
Our huts were burning as they dropped their Hell
'Hide behind this tree', I heard my grandmother yell

The Janjaweed laughed, those devil horsemen,
Killing and raping, again and again
Newborn babes weren't spared this nightmare
Pierced on swords, they were tossed in the air

My grandmother's feet were scratched and bled
'You must leave me, run into the desert,' she said
She hugged and kissed me, then pushed me away
As bombs erupted higher than their horses' neigh

I ran all night from the Janjaweed swords
Ringing in my ears were grandmother's words
I cried and screamed for the family I'd lost
The response was an echo like a winter night's frost

Like a ghost in the desert I walked under the sun
I could still hear the distant shout of a gun
Hurt with hunger and thirst, I could barely walk
At noon I sheltered under the shade of a rock

*My name is Nadya, listen to my song
What didn't kill me has made me strong*

I lived in a refugee camp but I was free
Grandmother died under a buckthorn tree
For three long years now we've been apart
Every day I still miss her, but she's here in my heart.