

## My Olive Oil Blood

Palestine is our mother,  
Our love, our blood,  
Our sweet and tender Teta

She is our Friday mornings,  
The adhan  
Mint tea, zaatar, warm bread and olives

We were plucked from her by force,  
Forefathers forced on foot,  
Miles from home  
To find a new home  
away from home

We cling onto anything we can,  
Knafeh and  
Keffeyeh brought to life  
To revive our memories, our Teta's stories  
Make them flourish  
Flowers blooming in foreign faraway lands

To grow up in the diaspora  
Is to grow up a silent fighter  
Fighting for the right to hold a passport,  
to identity,  
culture,  
heritage,  
homeland.  
The right to be Palestinian

To grow up in the diaspora  
Means whispered prayers at every Breaking News  
Our hearts sinking at each name uttered by the journalist  
Our eyelids stripped back against our will,  
to witness  
helplessly,  
aimlessly,  
The constant nakbas,  
The very horrors on our own land,  
Our blood

On foreign soil every footstep is murder.  
Murder of our heritage,  
Murder of our identity,  
Straying further and further away from our roots

Our identity an abstract outline now,  
The outline of our land

The outline of our land  
So we wear our gold chains with pride  
The outline of her map seeping into our skin

We may not be there  
To hold them hand in hand  
But we will always be part of the land

Woven and stitched into her tatreez,  
The intertwining roots and thread holding our beings together.

In the roots of her olive trees,  
Letting the olive oil  
Flow free in our veins

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## Reflective commentary

El Kurd writes of Palestine and the extreme struggle of being in Palestine, focusing on an elderly woman and her fight for something as simple as an olive tree. He describes the immense struggle by using familiar images that evoke mixed feelings of sorrow and home-sickness for any Palestinian. Due to my own personal experience as a Palestinian, I felt extremely connected to El Kurd's writing and wanted to give my perspective of the struggles of being a Palestinian on the outside looking in.

The poet creates a sense of desperation that Palestinians have to keep their land, which is shown through the elderly woman "clinging onto the tree trunk". This made me ponder the ways in which I "cling" to my identity and culture, as it can be hard to keep these alive in the diaspora. I chose to write about things from my heritage that are kept alive in my life away, such as keffiyeh, Knafeh, and olive oil. I also drew parallels to other lines in his poem, such as "In Jerusalem every footstep is a grave", by writing about my footsteps away from my homeland and what that means to me. Additionally, I played on his use of "roots stitched into the land", by comparing all Palestinians to a traditional embroidery, in that we are all connected through our love of Palestine, regardless of location.

"Bulldozers Undoing God" was a beautiful and emotional poem for me. The poem focuses on the elderly woman clinging onto a tree, however this idea spreads along the rest of the poem, describing the way in which Palestine has been ruined over decades of "constant Nakbas", and how Palestinians have been forced to cling to their identities, despite leading very different lives within and outside of the land.