

“My Poem”

Fadma El Ouariachi

Translated by Mohamed Daoudi

“**Taqessist inu,**” from the collection: *Yesremd-ayi wawar (Speech Has Taught Me)*, p.10

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Taqessist inu	My Poem
Fadma El Ouariashi	Fadma El Ouariashi
Taqessist-inu d timessi tasemmat A tt-ariḡ x yebriden War tte-tiwi rhemret Aman war tte-sxesiyen A tt-suysey di dmani A tt-carzen ifedjahren War tt-ikesi usiwan War tt-neqben ibaḡriwen	My poem is a burning medusa in the cold depths of the sea. I shall mark it on pathways. No flood will sweep it away. No water can put it out. Let it be the seeds that I shall sow for the farmers in the field, that no falcon will carry away, and no crow will peck at
Taqessist-inu Taqessist-inu tiwecca itḡayanen ihenjaren ad tt-zaren d yur n rēid ad farhen, ad iraren ad tt-iraren d fuleεleε s ucar deg iqwaren ad tt-iraren d qqnuffar ad tt-yecc wi tt ḡa yafen	My poem My poem is the morrow, children are yearning for, the new moon that promises the feast, when they shall rejoice and play. It shall be their fuleεleε, ⁽¹⁾ moulding earth among the fig trees. It shall be their hide and seek. He who finds ‘it’ will be free.
Taqessist-inu Taqessist-inu d turjit N wussan id ḡa yassen A tt-ariḡ s reqrem D wur-inu d idammen A tt-arecment thihramin D rhenni x ifassen A tt-ruccent d aman umarru I yesgenfan iyezzimen	My poem My poem is a dream of days to come. I shall inscribe it with ink, and with my heart and blood. The little girls shall tattoo it with henna ⁽²⁾ on their hands. They shall spray it around like horehound sap that heals the wounds ⁽³⁾

(1) Fuleεleε: a game in which children split into two equal groups, who then separate into two delimited areas (for example “between the big tree and the stream,” or

“between the river and the wheat field owned by X”) relatively far from each other so that what each group does is not clearly visible to the other. The members of each group then proceed within their own area to form small earthen round shapes (called “thiroura”) and keep them as hidden from view as possible (behind rocks, under rocky edges or among trees, or covered with leaves). Then, the two groups switch areas and try to find the earthen shapes that the other group has formed, and then crush them and destroy them. When one of the two groups decides that they have destroyed all they could find, they run towards the other group shouting “thiroura thiroura.” The two groups then head together toward that area to check how many earthen shapes have been flattened, and count the ones that have not been found. Once they are done, they proceed to the other area to do the same thing. The group with the highest number of “thiroura” left intact is declared the winner.

- (2) Henna: a reddish-brown dyestuff prepared from the dried and ground leaves of the henna shrub plant, commonly used in North Africa to decorate the skin. (Adapted from *The American Heritage Dictionary*)
- (3) White horehound (called merrou or marrou in the Rif) is one of the plants used for medical purposes, mainly by applying its fluid substance or sap to wounds.

Fadma el Ouariachi was born in Farkhana near Nador (1957). Her collection of poems “*Yesremd-ay-i wawar*” (*Speech Taught Me*) was published in 1998. El Ouariachi’s poems are about freedom, the affirmation of identity, the celebration of culture and emancipation. Her poetry uses symbolism and imagery derived from local folk culture and experience. Many of her poems were rendered in songs by leading Riffian singers and bands.