

Arab Women Poets of the Modern Period

It has been the privilege of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World to have had professor Rose Ghurayyib as Editor of Al-Raida for many years. Professor Ghurayyib is a prominent writer and a well-known literary figure in the Arab world.

It is now an honor to have her as our advisor and consultant; writer of editorials and articles in our newsletter. One of her many contributions to the Institute's publications are her translations of poems by Arab women in **Contemporary Arab Women Writers and Poets**⁽¹⁾.

We propose to share with you some of the poems translated by Professor Ghurayyib in the Monograph.

(1) Monograph No.5., IWSAW: Beirut, 1985, by Rose Ghurayyib and Evelyn Accad.

Saniyya Saleh (Syrian) suggesting bitterness and latent revolt.

Tears of the Princess

A certain cry chains my heart to the throat of earth,

*Foam is my lost voice
My dress might be false,
My jewels might be false
Everything in the world might be false
Except my tears,
I am the woman with indented years,
Bleeding like a beheaded soldier,
Going and coming behind windows,
Like a princess preparing to flee
Because fear has spoiled my joy and my childhood.*

Lam'ia Abbas 'Amra (Iraqi) - who addresses the laboring classes as friends and associates. To a woman baker she speaks in the following terms:

*I wish my poems were like your oven,
Their letters would be transformed
Into loaves of bread
Feeding the poor and the beggars
Lying on sidewalks,
But my poems, alas, are only letters
Fluttering around privileged lips.*

Fadua Tuqan (Palestinian) - declaring «she had found herself.» She rejected the myths that had obscured her mind, facing the world and declaring openly and freely her innermost thoughts.

*I have found it, blow up, oh storms,
Cloud the face of the sky
Roll as ye will oh days
Be sunny or dark.*

*My lights will never fade out
All the shadows that darkened my life
All the black shrouds of night
Are gone, buried in the abyss of the past
When my soul discovered my soul!*

Huda Naamani (Lebanese) - about the equality of the sexes.

*What is a man?
What is a woman?
If men gave birth to men,
And women to women,
Complete cleavage would occur,
But in every man, there is a feminine part,
In every woman, a masculine part,
A part that is ignored, stifled, suppressed.
Why should not the part call the part?
And the whole call the whole?*