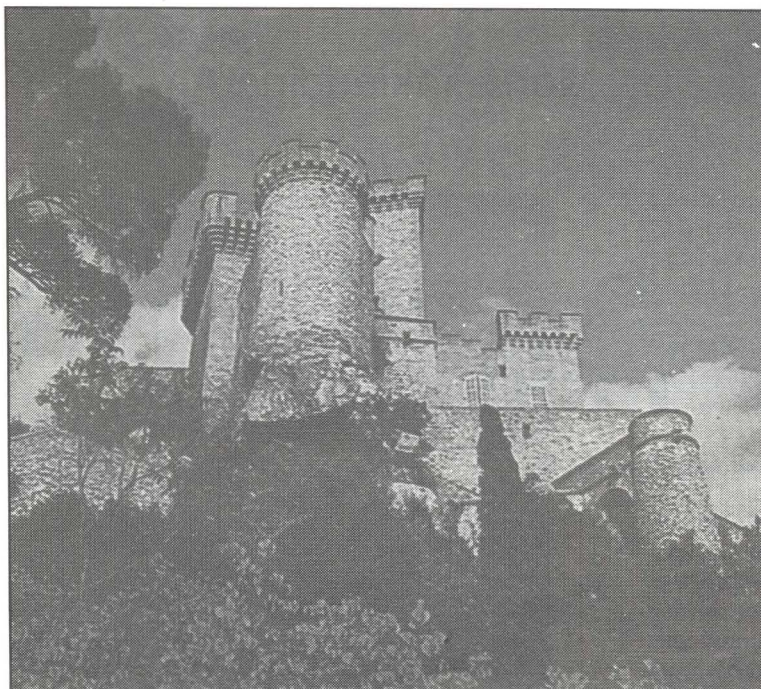


# The Castle

Aida Farrag Graff



A year later, they brought his body home  
Battered and beaten, bloated and black.  
Through this crumpled, mangled mass,  
The mother recognized his pyjamas,  
And what remained of her careful darning,  
A token of times past when he teased her  
Amid her pots and pans.

They murdered you, hope of my heart, hope of my  
hopes.  
They turned your sweet breath into putrefaction.  
Your laughter gone, the gleam of your eyes glazed  
over,  
By God only knows  
What wrenching of nails,  
Burning of parts,  
Stretching of arms,  
Blowing of bellies.  
For we have heard, your father and I,

The screams from the castle,  
Fearing every night they might be yours.

They were yours and others',  
The screams of all our sons,  
Battered and beaten, bloated and black.  
And here you lie crumpled, death of my heart,  
While your father pays army men  
Their bill of lading, your cost of residence.  
For the castle, they say, takes good care of sons,  
And it was all an unfortunate accident.

Aida Farrag Graff  
Toronto, 1992

\* Dr. Aida Farrag Graff is an Egyptian Canadian born in Japan now living in Toronto. She is quite involved in women's issues and has lectured in Canada and the U.S.A. on Women in the Middle East.