

Zohra El Fassia by Erez Bitton

by tsipi keller

Zohra El Fassia

a singer at the court of King Muhammad the Fifth in Rabat,
Morocco.

It is said that when she sang
soldiers drew knives
to push through the crowds
and touch the hem of her dress
kiss her fingertips
express their thanks with a rial coin.

Zohra El Fassia.

These days she can be found in Ashkelon,
in the poor section of Atikot C,
near the welfare office,
the odor of leftover sardine tins
on a wobbly three-legged table,
splendidly rugs stacked on a Jewish Agency bed,
and she, clad in a fading housecoat,
lingers for hours before the mirror
wearing cheap makeup,
and when she says: "Muhammad the Fifth, apple of our eyes"
it takes a moment before you understand.

Zohra El Fassia has a husky voice,
a pure heart, and eyes
awash with love.

Zohra El Fassia.

<https://www.boaeditons.org/collections/erez-bitton/products/you-who-cross-my-path>

