

Anfal means "to take everything"

by Yasmin Elaine Waring

you flourished

while thirsting in the blue-black shadow of Babylon
where the sun creeps too close and glares
thrusting shifty prisms upon a young girl
who does not shield her large eyes
or shrinks from the heat

reds and oranges and yellows sought you out and hottened your skin
and

you opened your arms wide
overcome with candied hope that you really could
catch them all with cool hands and swallow them whole
swelling inside with so much beauty

there was no way to hide you

splintered blisses escaped your fingertips
still sticky from picking dates that stained deep-creased hands
the only sign that you would grow old over night

your sway like the cyrillic bend in the Euphrates
stilled tip-toeing antelope
enchanted even crusty poplar trees rooted in salty earth
who fashioned you a parasol of fingered branches
to crown their japheh-draped fawn

they tried to trick the sun

knowing that the sun covets what it creates
knowing that they will not hear you scream
knowing that they will not smell you burn
knowing that the rain will not come

they drop white leaves covering your light foot prints

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