CREATIVE ENCOUNTERS

The Crack Invites

Yousif M. Qasmiyeh

**ABSTRACT:** Returning to the refugee camp, “The Crack Invites” revisits what it means to invite and be invited to a camp. This invitation remains suspended, unanswered, and perhaps unanswerable to this day.

**KEYWORDS:** arrival, dialects, house and home, refugee camp, sacrifices, threshold, welcome

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**The Crack Invites**

There must always be a crack.

In a crack in our old wall, I planted my intentions and left.

Before the same house, in the risen house, narrow and wide at the same time, in the same camp that is, I await your arrival. This time there will be no sacrifices but the dialect. You will borrow mine as we see for the sake of seeing, and I will borrow yours—a dialect for a dialect, noise for noise, to walk the road that is called a camp.

They will slaughter no beast on the threshold. Nor will they soak their fists with fresh blood to make prints in the name of the newcomer. They will only say: it is our blood, whether it is there or not.

This time they will bear their names on parchments and with the caution of unborn things, they will stare at you and your dialect.

I invite you to the limbs of the camp, to an above-place and below-god, to an aridity, infinite, with a name.

I invite you so you would see my mother’s swollen feet treading on time as she performs her eternal prayers and despair.
At their plants, they will gaze. In your presence. Their only things. At the horizontal of the horizontal. They will stomp on the ground, once, twice, to awaken themselves from this aged dream. There, they will dust their old tools and memories, with hands made of dust, to cook you colors and meat, and wait for another coming.

Hands submitted at the door, draped in shadows and dried coriander. They put forth everything they have, from newborns to sounds, and remind you and themselves: this is ours since the camp. This is ours since God.

The crack invites.

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