

BREAD NOVICE

خلينا نسمع عن الخبز!

Sing about bread? Why would anyone do that?

In Arab culture, bread often has a distinctive association with the idea of home and family. It's something children grow up associating with home-cooked meals, and in turn often takes on the symbolism of love, nourishment and sustenance. Let's listen to some poems and songs in Arabic and, as we follow along with the lyrics, see how these artists use bread as an emotional link to the listener.

“To my mother” إلى أمي

Poem by Mahmoud Darwish (Palestine)

Sung by Marcel Khalife (Lebanon)

Translated by A.Z. Foreman

SOURCE



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Dearly I yearn for my mother's bread,
 My mother's coffee,
 Mother's brushing touch.
 Childhood is raised in me,
 Day upon day in me.
 And I so cherish life
 Because if I died
 My mother's tears would shame me.

أحنُّ إلى خبز أمي
 وقهوة أمي
 ولمسة أمي ..
 وتكبر في الطفولة
 يوماً على صدر يوم
 وأعشق عمري لأني
 إذا متُّ
 أخجل من دمع أمي!

Set me, if I return one day,
 As a shawl on your eyelashes, let your hand
 Spread grass out over my bones,
 Christened by your immaculate footsteps, as on holy land.
 Fasten us with a lock of hair,
 With thread strung from the back of your dress.
 I could grow into godhood
 Commend my spirit into godhood
 If I but touch your heart's deep breadth.

خذيني .. إذا عدت يوماً
 وشاحاً لهدبك
 وغطي عظامي بعشب
 تعمّد من طهر كعبك
 وشدي وثاقي .. بخصلة شعر
 بخيط يلوح في ذيل ثوبك
 عساني أصير إلهاً
 إلهاً أصير ..
 إذا ما لمست قرارة قلبك!

Set me, if ever I return,
 In your oven as fuel to help you cook,
 On your roof as a clothesline stretched in your hands.
 I can no longer stand,
 Weak without your daily prayers.

ضعيني إذا ما رجعتُ
 وقوداً بتنور نارك
 وحبل غسيل على سطح دارك
 لأنني فقدت الوقوف
 بدون صلاة نهارك

I am old, give me back the stars of childhood
 That I may chart the homeward quest
 Back with the migrant birds,
 Back to your awaiting nest.

هرمتُ فردّي نجوم الطفولة
 حتى أشارك
 صغار العصافير .. درب الرجوع ..
 لعش إنتظارك

BREAD NOVICE

“Homemade Bread” خبز الدار

Sung by Abderrahim Askouri

Translation by Mike Turner



There's nothing better than homemade bread

From the hands of your mother,

Or your wife,

Virtuous and gentle

And what I want for you

Is to be careful not get full of yourself

And to forget where you come from

And what I want for you

Is to be careful not to change yourself

And to throw away your honor

ما كاين ما احسن من خبز الدار

يكون من يد المييمة

ولا مولات الدار

الصالحة الحنينة

والي يهمني فيك

عنداك تتكبر

و أصلك تجليه

والي يهمني فيك

عنداك تتغير

وشرفك ترميه

Are you aware of poems, religious texts, or expressions – in different languages or from other cultures – in which bread occupy a central place?