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The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue  
by  
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HODA

Among the drama of nations,  
if nations were types of dramas,  
Palestine would be a monologue.

A lone voice yapping away like some animal separated from the herd (to, er, hook another image to the monologue one for a second) — caught in a trap, and — you hear it in the distance, hear its wails, and — you wish it well. — You wish it would stop. You wish whatever pain it was in would end. Mainly so you could get on with your day; which you're having a hard enough time trying to get through as it is. And when you know you can't, when you know it won't shut up or go away, you begin to, well — you tune it out. You tune out this painful monologue. You start to say — to hell with it. It is what it is. Perhaps it has always been this way. Perhaps it was born to be an example of

something or other to appreciate what you have and take for granted: A country. With borders. A place you can hurry back to when the world around you is too much, too unwelcoming. A flag you can stick on your head like those toy propeller blades stuck on hats that kids used to wear, and that look so silly, much like flags do, actually, look silly; really, the whole concept. But with a flag you can make believe you're moving about some imagined territory that's yours, with its own air space and edges; that welcomes you and wants you; and even though this imagined place is an illusion, it's one you all agree on, so everyone can live and play in their own spot.

So, yes:

among nations, Palestine is a monologue. Is living a monologue. And you see, when people talk to you, the Palestinian, when people ask about it, about this annoying wail that seeps through their waking day now and again, this on-going groan that never seems to end, and you, the Palestinian, explain,

you —

you become this monologue. Because really, the person is probably not engaging you in a one-on-one sit down, with the intention of forming a bond of any kind, (I mean, may be, but not essentially) no, the question of Palestine, the questions about Palestine places you, the mouthpiece of — the accidental representative of this still

unacknowledged place, places you

in that

dreadful explanation mode where you — though your lips are moving, your mouth actually is open in this rictus of

(She opens her mouth wide)

rictus of deep angst where you find yourself once again having to prove to seemingly intelligent people the equivalent of the world is round, or, in this case, that you exist. I'm here. I'm — er — I'm talking. I'm talking to you. And the question, you see, is directed at that, essentially, when you break it down, when you sort it out and trace the genealogy behind every question, you come down to that:

Do you have a right to all the perks that come with a person who exists? And a person only really exists when they can lay claim to something as basic as a — as a country. It's all right being a free spirit slash citizen of the world, but first you need to have a place that claims you as its own before you can go off gallivanting about without need of addressing that faint sense that you're not quite, um, legitimate. And if you can't do that — if you can't have a free and easy dialogue with others without all those issues hanging in the air, then you're...stuck in a monologue.

And what is more troubling, you see,  
as you become this never-ending monologue,  
you, the monologist, basically suffer the risk of becoming your own echo chamber. So that essential life affirming words like "fairness", and "justice", and let's throw in "truth", they lose all semblance of reality. So that you may end up going a little loopy without any verifiable bridges that can lead you out — outside of yourself.

Okay: wait: let me back up.

We all suffer from talking to ourselves too much. Never mind Palestine for the moment. It's a shame we can't do more with our brain than subject it to the nonsensical stuff that

overwhelms us every day. It's bad enough struggling to say "Hi, can I draw your attention to this little boot that's on our neck", but simply being human is teeth-gnashing all by itself. And there's something to be said for those — I have to say — chatter-ceasing drugs like Zoloft and Prozac. Speaking of which — and, really, I don't want to alarm you, but let me just say this: I'm not sure there's a point to all this.

This might have a point. I'm not ruling that out. But I just want to apologize ahead of time in case.

Especially since I have a personal distaste for monologues. Or mono dramas. Or solo performances.

I hate them, to be honest.

I detest monologues. And those who practice them. Subjecting an audience who could be at home watching TV, or making love with their partner, or enjoying a home-cooked meal, are instead listening to someone yammer away about something that's really not half as important as the person thinks it is. I mean who do these people think they are? Standing in front of an audience for a chunk of time, bitching about some personal experience or other, and I'm like, no: your life is not that interesting. I don't want to know why someone dumped you, or what happened when you went home for thanksgiving. If I want to listen to someone bitch for an hour I'll listen to myself yap, and God knows I make an honest enough effort not to encourage my own tendencies; which are huge, as I've been saying, huge, I'm consumed by my need to talk. So why should I listen to you bitch and moan when I can barely tolerate it in myself?

Monologues are just bastards.

They really are. They are the bastard children of drama.

Runts.

Stateless.

Very much like refugees, and we know how monotone they can be, always in open-mouth mode and needy (“I’m suffering, I’m bleeding, I’m dying”) No, no, monologues are really failures of the imagination to imagine relationships outside of the speaker’s own little world.

A stand-up routine of sorts without the benefit of laughs (usually). And there’s usually this flop-sweat hanging over the monologist if he or she can’t keep one step ahead of collapsing in on herself, more than she already has. Because the weight, the only weight the monologist seems able to bear is the weight of her own words because everything else feels like a betrayal.

An abandonment.

And in this, the monologist is — well...

very much like Palestine...if you will.

So full of her own necessity and presence and at the same time, nursing this sense of feeling — abandoned. So full of herself *because* of this feeling of being abandoned. Like she should have been cast in *something*, damn it. Signed up with the cast list of other nations.

And instead of being a good little actor and trying again later she has the audacity to strike out on her own because she has a lot to say and will not be shut up.

So. Anyway. Yes:

No full-fledged drama tonight.

Just me.

And I'm not enough of a drama queen to make up for it.

And as I said, this is really all by way of stating this, er, this basic idea which is —

basically a very long aside (sorry),

but which is,

“In the drama of nations Palestine is a monologue”. With the obvious or not so obvious follow up that Palestine, when all is said and done, over and above being a country that has yet to be acknowledged, officially, and celebrated, and allowed to participate on the world stage, etc., that Palestine, really, is, it becomes...a state of mind.

Which can affect us all.

Regardless of whether you are or aren't Palestinian.

That is...

should you ever find yourself alone; among a group of strangers; and you aren't able to make a connection, try as you might, please take note that at that moment you are in fact an honorary member of a state that currently has no solid borders. You can just say to yourself, at that point, as you fail to get through and people look at you like you're barfing up something that really should be left alone, you can just say, “gee: I guess I'm in a Palestine State of Mind.” This is how it must feel. Not quite a member. Or: dismembered. With a lot of reassembling going on even as you try to take apart the

wrong ideas they have of you. This Frankenstein they have cobbled together in place of you, to *place* you, and which waddles about their imagination even as you stand there full in their face and speaking. Only to yourself as it turns out. And you know the torch-bearing mob and the end credits and the climactic music are never far behind. Yes, at that point, I'd have to say...welcome to my country.

