

Cornerstone
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Women make things grow:
Sometimes like the crocus,
surprised by rain, emerging fully
grown from the belly of the earth;
Others like the palm tree with
its promise postponed,
rising in a slow
deliberate
spiral to the sky...

Women make things smooth
to the touch,
like the kneading of
leavened bread at the dawn of hunger;
And coarse like the brush
of a homespun coat on
careworn shoulders and bare
arms barely touching on
the night of deportation.

Women make things cold
sharp and hard
like a legal argument thrust
before the threat
of search and detention;
Or warm
and gentle like
justice in a poem,
like the suggestion of
the image of freedom
as a warm bath,
and a long soak,
in an undemolished home.

Women make things -
And as we, in separate
worlds, braid
our daughters' hair
in the morning, you and
I, each
humming to herself,
suddenly
stops
and hears the
tune of the other

Hanan Ashrawi

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Strength, perseverance, faithfulness...

They bear the children of Palestine; the future of a centuries old nation lies sleeping in their arms, or plays beneath their watchful gaze. They make careful homes in refugee camps, bake bread, and pull vegetables from the soil to feed their families. They take classes at the YWCA, or attend university to better themselves with knowledge, thereby bettering their families and villages. They worship and pray. They work for justice, and for peace in their broken land. Strong, determined and faithful, they lead.

They are the women of Palestine.

This issue of Cornerstone is dedicated to them.