

Intertwined like the roots of a Palm tree

“Assalamu alaikum.” A young man knocked on the window.
Flakes of dust and dirt fell like angles
“Wa alaikum salaam.” His eyes shone,
A youthful glow like children’s eyes on Eid morning.
“Do you know how I could get to Badi Palace?”
This man will be lost, he does not know land.
“Get in the cab, I will take you!”
“Are you sure?” Fool.
“Do you want a lift or not?”
The man clambered in.
Excitement, joy.
They seeped from him
Like rose syrup from a bottle.

The building is full of life
Yet an emptiness plagues it.
The footsteps of slaves,
As they scurried through the stone passageways,
Hidden from view, ready to emerge.
The concourse, a forest of white marble and yellow sandstone,
Glowing in the midday sun
Dressed and adorned
Greens, reds, purples, yellows
Reaching up towards Sol
A boy. He is sitting with a man
“You must know the stories of your forefathers sire,
They paved the route you walk along
And one day you will pave your own,
Where your children will walk.”
So many stories woven within these tunnels
Of sandstone and tiles.
Both myths and lives imprinted
Mosaics depicting ancient myths of Gods and hero’s
Chipped from children running.
The children who grew up to be kings.
They all lay, timeless on the walls.

The driver’s dark eyes pierced into the mans.
His skin was tinted with the colours of rose
His eyes were light, invisible in the sun’s rays.
A foreigner.
“What brings someone like you to Marrakesh?”
“The palace, I’m a historian.”
These people. Scholars,
thinking they have business in ancient lands.
“So, you come and dig at the earth,
destroy our lands, leave with our history?”
The man looked shocked, fool.
“I want to uncover the truth. Our history,

It is intertwined,
Like a palm tree,
It grows tall and stands alone
But beneath the surface their roots
Their roots twist into each other.
They are connected,
Like all of humankind.”

The Azaan echoed across the compound.
A soul couldn't be found lurking.
Images of ancient kings,
Depictions of the Maghreb.
The hall's only occupation holy scriptures.
“Ashadu an la ilaha illa illa-ilah,
wa ashadu anna muhammadan rasul ullah”
Came alive off the walls
Sung out to the masses.
The air was cool,
the sun stood proudly in the sky.
Fragments of its rejection danced on the sandstone,
Some fell through the carved screens,
Their geometric shapes mirrored by the lilies
that sat grandly on the water.
Swaying side to side, reacting to a sudden disruption.
The Dhuhr was finished.
The queen and the wives emerged into the light.
But only the queen stayed,
the only one who could.
She sat, inhaling the timeless air.
A picture of radiance and beauty.

“You speak with such hope.”
The driver found it funny.
This man was so young but so sure,
His dreams still sat on his shoulder.
“Not many of you care for the beauty
The frozen lives that sit in our buildings.
They just come
They click, click, click.
But they don't see what they are standing next to,
Don't realise that this could have been
The ground where a mighty king stood in the name of Allah.”
“Or the emperor.” The foreigner interjected.
His eyes fixated on the desert they drove through.
“Perhaps.” The driver chuckled,
“You are young, don't spend your life fixated on the past.
The future is what you will live.”
The man's eyes met the drivers for the first time
His eyes piercing,
but with a glowing warmth that pushed through.
“There is no future without the past,

I hope that one day my future is studied
the way I study the futures of these kings,
The kings who conquered these great lands.”
The men looked at each other,
“You speak with such love of my country,
One would think you were one of us.”
The car came a halt,
outside stood a magnificent structure of stone.
The man climbed out
“Perhaps I once was.”
The driver chuckled,
Perhaps indeed.
“I hope I see you again,” the man said
His pale face poking into the window.
“We will,” the driver replied
“Remember, our histories and futures are intertwined.
Goodbye my friend.”
He drove off, dust tailing the car.
And outside the palace,
Stood his friend.