

MEMORIES

Libretto

A musical and visual meditation on love, longing and womanhood expressed through stories, poetry, and song traditions of Kurdish women in Eastern Turkey and women in central Appalachia.

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1. Narîne Hey Narîn

Two Kurdish weddings songs from Eastern Turkey.

Narînê em hatin te wo
Delalê em hatin te wo
Tu bike hay karê xwe wo
Şîn û girî be feyde wo

*We're coming to take you away, don't cry
You and I are friends
You are a flower
Flower in the mountain
Love of the man*

Narînê guharê zêro
Delalê guharê zêro
Tu razê ha îşev têro
Sibêye wey ûxir xêro

Narînê hey narîn hey narîn hey narîn
Narînê hey narîn delalê

Wez û tu hevalîn hey narîn hey narîn
Wez û tu hevalîn delalê

Narînka çiyaye hey narîn hey narîn
Delala çiyayî delalê

Li nav gul û giyayî hey narîn hey narîn
Li nav gul û giyayî delalê

Li bin sere zavayî hey narîn hey narîn
Li bin sere zavayî delalê

2. "I could tell you a thousand stories"

As told by Janet Marie Pace, Whitesburg, KY

I could tell you a thousand stories

...so Mommy was really responsible for just everything really. She cooked all the meals, she washed all the clothes, she raised the gardens, she canned the food, like a thousand other stories you could hear around here about woman and what all they did.

To me Mommy was a little bit different.

I guess we all think our mommies are the most special. all the women around me were strong, and they all could cook like a dream

...to me it was almost a classiness about her. She seemed like an elegant lady in a way.

Her name was Alberta, she didn't like her name but I always thought that sounded like a noble name to me. The people around her called her Bertie and my dad called her Berta, he was the only one that called her Berta so that was kinda special I thought.

She'd play games with us, get out in the yard, and run and play. And worked from daylight to dark, ironed all the clothes---- they were just amazing.

I tried to think about how I think Mommy influenced my life so much. You know, I could live ten lifetimes and I could never compare to Mom in my eyes you know.

And Mom, she just held everything together you know.

I think she kinda felt lonely a lot there

She was just alike in all the stories you hear about being able to do everything. You know how women were.

But she was a happy woman, she sang, one of her favorites songs is "Life is like a mountain railroad" I don't know if you've ever heard that. It's a religious song but it's a pretty old song...

Something about the conductor and you gotta get on the train.



3. Werne Sêva

Werne sêva werne sêva
Talane li xoxan û sêva

Wez sêvek bam li sere darê
Wez xoxek bam li bine darê
Min ne dene deste yarê
Dê min leq det li ber didanê

Werne sêva werne sêva
Talane li xoxan û sêva

Wez sêvek bam li ber dikana
Wez xoxek bam li ber dikana
Min nedene dest nezana
Dê min kulken li ber didana

Werne sêva werne sêva
Talane li xoxan û sêva
Werne sêva werne sêva
Talane li xoxan û sêva

*Apple, come to the apples.
I wish I could be an apple on the tree.
My love would come and bite me.
If I'm so beautiful and smart,
Don't give me to a bad man.*



4. Sally

Sung by Sarah Ogan Gunning

There was a young lady from London she came
She was a fair beauty and Sally was her name
Her riches was more than a king could possess
But her beauty was more than her wealth at its best

There was a young gentleman, a rich merchant's son
And ten thousand dollars was his income
He was wounded in love and he knew not for why
And on this fair lady he first cast his eye.

–Sally, oh Sally, pretty Sally – said he,
–I know you despise me because I am poor–
–Oh no, I don't hate you or any other man,
But far as to love you is more than I can.–

Six months over and six months past
This fair lady took sick at the last
She's wounded in love and she knew not for why
And for this young man she once did deny.

Off of her fingers gold rings she pulled three
Said—Take these and wear them while dancing o'er me.—
—Your rings I'll deny and your body I'll disdain
And I will leave you in sorrow and pain.—



4. Gulê

Hay gulê gulê gulê esmerê nazê gulê
Hay gulê gulê gulê ha bilindê şêl û milê
Ez gul bum l'nav baxanim esmerê nazê gulê
Ez gul bum l'nav baxanim ha bilindê şêl û
mile

Kes nebît gula jê ket esmerê nazê gulê
Kes nebît gula jê ket ha bilindê şêl û mile
Ez gul bum gula zerim esmerê nazê gulê
Ez gul bum gula zerim ha bilindê şêl û milê

Hay gulê gulê gulê esmerê nazê gulê
Hay gulê gulê gulê ha bilindê şêl û milê

*I am the most beautiful flower in the garden
Nobody can pick this flower.*

The yellow flower.

Most beautiful flower in the garden.

5. Tewxan Tewxan

Tewxan tewxan tewxane lê xana min
Tewxan tewxan tewxane cînara min
Kîjê kiras kitanê lê xana min
Zeriyê kiras kitanê cînara min

Xanê got ez wenakem lê xana min
Zeriyê got ez wenakem cînara min
Guhê xwe bi guhar na kem lê xana min
Guhê xwe bi guhar na kem cînara min

Tewxan tewxan tewxane lê xana min
Tewxan tewxan tewxane cînara min

Xanê got ez şu nakem lê xana min
Zeriyê got ez şu nakem cînara min
Kezî û biska şe nakem lê xana min
şu bi kurkê xelkî nakem cînara min

Tewxan tewxan tewxane lê xana min
Tewxan tewxan tewxane cînara min
Tewxan, my woman,

Tewxan my neighbor,

*Wearing traditional clothes
I don't want to do it,*

*I don't want to put earrings (get married)
I don't want to marry,*

*I don't want to braid my hair,
I don't want to marry with another man*





6. I'll Tell You A Story, It Might Be A Sad One

Sung by Maggie Parker Hammond

I'll tell you a story, it might be a sad one
Of troubles and trials when this war first begun
it's leaving my country, in sorrow to mourn
To take a trip over, those mountains to roam

We traveled by daylight, we traveled by night
To the top of two mountains, yes came plain in sight
For the miners had built them a nice little town
This is my first beginning, my prospectin' to find.

7. Hay Welato

Hay welato welato lê lê le min welato
Kevne gundo mîrato lê lê le min welato
Sebra yarê pê hato lê lê le min gelato

Dê çime welatî bînim lê lê le min welato
Nîsk û noka lê biçînim lê lê le min welato
Hay bara yarê bihelînim lê lê le min welato

Hay dê çime welatî sehkem...
Hay nîsk û noka pêve kem...
Bara yarê jê ratkem lê lê le min welato

*Oh my country, old village, I feel good there
I will go see my country, I will work, planting
lentils and garbanzos.*

*I will harvest them for my life
I will go look at my country, I will sow lentils
and garbanzos.*

*Building my home, putting some aside for
my life.*

8. Mom

As told by Mae Boggs, Cowan, KY

*Mom. She sewed for all of us. Made our clothes. Boys and girls.
Anybody raised sixteen children has to be a good mom.*

*Yes, she was.
But she had rules. Pretty strict.
To be in the bed by nine o'clock*

*She was a great mom
She ain't never had time to sit down and talk to us much.*

9. Seydik

A mother's mourning song for a child who was accidentally killed by his father.

Ay lê dilikê min evdalê xodê l'ber felekêê..

De dilikê min evdalê xodê l'ber felekêê
Ay lê hunê hespa bînin zîna pavêjin ser
kêlekê

Ay lê îro sê roj û sê şeve seydikê min
zavayee..

Hey lê xodêkin bibin dîvana Mehemed
begê wayy..

Hey de rabe seydko seydevano,
biçuko tifalo, dengbêjo bilûrvano
Ay le te şal û şapik meleze van nêryanoo...
hey lê dayika te nemîne j'her dû çavano...

*I take the horse and saddle the horse...
It's been 3 days and 3 nights that my son
Seydik is groom.*

*I take him to the place of the head of the
tribe.*

*Come on Seydiko, my son, come to your
feet...*

*my child, my dengbêj, my kaval player...
your clothes are made from sheepskin...*

*I can die for you... you should not be dead
I should be marrying you off in nice
clothes....*

My heart... I'm heartbroken from mourning

10. Zêrînê

Wedding song sung by the aunt of the bride.

Hay zêrînê zêrînê daykê dînê zêrînê
Hay zêrînê zêrînê kur mêvanê zêrînê

Tişt û malê xizînê daykê dînê zêrînê
Tişt û malê xizînê kur mêvanê zêrînê
Hay zêrîna min daye daykê dînê zêrînê
Stunkûka liber bêlayê kur mêvanê zêrînê

Tişt û malê xizînê daykê dînê zêrînê
Hay zêrîna min metê kur mêvanê zêrînê

Stunkûka liber xîvetê daykê dînê zêrînê
Te divê bo bike xilmetê kur mêvanê zêrînê

*You will be the main pillar of the house.
If you want to serve your husband, you can.
You are in control of the household.*



11. Hand of God on the Wall

Sung by Sarah Ogan Gunning

At the fest of Belshazzar, and a thousand of his lords,
As they drank from golden vessels, as the book of Truth records
It was night as they rambled through the royal palace hall
They were seized with fear and trembling with the hand on the wall.

'Twas the hand of God on the wall
It was the hand of God on the wall
Will your record be found wanting
Or will you be found trusting
(While the) hand is writing on the wall.

They could not read the writing, for God they never knew
And they sent for Prophet Daniel to tell them what to do
He told these naughty monarchs of all their many sins
And he told old Belshazzar—Your rule is at an end.

'Twas the hand of God on the wall.....
,

See the brave captain Daniel as he stood before the throne,
And rebuked the naughty monarchs for their mighty deeds of wrong
It was night as they rambled through the royal palace hall
They were seized with condemnation with the hand on the wall.

'Twas the hand of God on the wall.....



12. Narîne

Xaniyê me li xendekê hey narîn hey narîn
Oliya me li xendekê delalê

Zava li ser kullekê hey narîn hey narîn
Zava li ser kullekê delalê

Li hîviya çav bellekê hey narîn hey narîn
Li hîviya çav bellekê delalê
Narînê hey narîn hey narîn hey narîn
Narînê hey narîn delalê

*Home is there
The groom sits in his room
Waits for his bride
With beautiful eyes*

13. Dîne

Wez ne dînim ne diristim
Way lê lê way lê lê way lê lê dîne
Wez liser bankê te nivistim
Way lê lê way lê lê way lê lê dîne
Wan çavreşan wez êxistim
Way lê lê way lê lê way lê lê dîne

Wez ne dînim ne dil mayîme
Way lê lê way lê lê way lê lê dîne
Wez (li) ser bankê te razay me

Way lê lê way lê lê way lê lê dîne
Van çavreşan derman dayîme
Way lê lê way lê lê way lê lê dîne

*I'm not crazy but I'm not normal
I slept on your roof.
When I saw your black eyes
I fell down from the roof.
Your black eyes give me medicine.*

14. Rainbow Mid-Life's Willows

Sung by Almeda Riddle

Last night I dreamed of my true love
All in my arms I held her.
But I awoke, she was not there
Now I must live without her.

Her yellow hair like strands of gold
Was streaming over my pillow.
Oh she's the only one I love
My rainbow mid life's willows.

I'd search for high and I'd search for low
I made some low inquiries
But they all said no, we've seen no such
We would have no such in our keeping.

But when she heard from me those words
She whispered low at her window
--Oh darling, I'd be in your company
But locks and chains doth hinder.--

Now when I heard those words of hers
I swore that room I would enter
Or I would fore'ever know the reason why
She was locked and chained within there.

But up stepped her father stern and wise
Likewise two stalwart brothers
Before you enter that locked room
In your life's blood you wallow.

They've taken away my ahn true love
And tears now wet my pillow
Oh she's the only one I love
My rainbow mid life's willows.



~ In loving memory of Edulê Kılıç. ~