Memory Pictures # 5

Her daughter had painted the view that was hanging outside the window
Of the house that was not her original one.

Column [1] / Hadeel Abu Johar [2] December 3, 2019

This time I opened my email inbox
And found a letter from Salma!
I felt a slight tension, simply because
Usually I am the one who writes to her.

The letter was multicolored,
As pretty as Salma's cheeks,
As strange as our lives' journey.
She wrote about the children and added some complications.

Salma, I am used to writing about wars
About loneliness and self-loathing,
About my relationship with the pair of glasses,
About my mother and her intricate dream of boarding a train.

She wrote that her daughter had started writing letters in all the languages
She didn't care if she was writing in Arabic or any other language.
It angered me a bit, but she went on
That her daughter had painted the view
That was hanging outside the window
Of the house that was not her original one,
But belonged to all the homeless daughters.



The beautiful view of Haifa looked different in Salma's colors
Neither green nor blue.
The colors of the spectrum disappeared from the page
Of a girl not yet in the spring of her youth,
The drawing I had seen was somewhat surreal.

I smiled, but with fear.
There are red spots in Salma's painting
The same red spots I have begun to see myself,
And in a rush to react to that which had hurt me
I came back to myself
Mumbling:
This red is bothering me
It had never bothered me before
Never concerned me
I always ignored it
By now I see it with my own eyes!
Confused, I said, so that together we won't be ashamed:
Do you think it is right to 'dirty' Haifa up with the red marker, Salma?

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