

LULLABIES OF THE INNOCENT

Kelly-Mae Saville

The children are sleeping,
Lullabies hum through the air.
The children are sleeping,
White blankets shroud their hair.
The children are sleeping,
*Tisbah ‘ala khair.*¹
The lullabies, Lord of the Flies.²
An *‘ifrit*³ among the *jinn*⁴ (the “Peace-Makers”⁵),
Immune to their bellowing cries.
Extermination of kith and kin,
The triumphant *ṣumūd muqāwim*⁶ never dies.
Humming lullabies, seeking *ṣamīdīn*⁷ souls without sin.

Notes

1. Arabic expression of “good night” with a literary meaning of “wake up to the good things.”
2. Alludes to the novel by William Golding. Stranded on an uninhabited island, and the interplay of morality, leadership, and the shifts between civility and chaos.
3. Powerful malicious demons associated with spirits who inhabit desolate ruins.
4. Invisible spirits (good and evil) who inhabit the world alongside humans.
5. Alludes to the translation of Surah Al-Baqarah (2: 11–12), “When they are told, ‘Do not spread corruption in the land,’ they reply, ‘We are only peace-makers!’ Indeed, it is they who are the corruptors, but they fail to perceive it.”
6. Derives from the Palestinian cultural and ideological theme of *ṣumūd*, meaning “steadfastness.” This “resistance steadfastness” is a political strategy which seek ways to resist and undermine the Israeli occupation.
7. Refers to the people who exhibit the qualities of *ṣumūd* “steadfastness.”

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