

A Human Alien – by Teresa Ghostine

I rush through the crowds of chanting people in an attempt to reach the big screen. The nation's new president is about to be named. Millions of eyeballs are glued to the reporter's fast-paced lips that translate our anticipations into words. Suddenly, a jolly roar erupts as the face of the new president is painted on the screen. I squint my eyes quizzically; confused as to what I was beholding. I roughly rub my eyelids in a metaphoric attempt to recuperate my eyesight only to be met with a now blurry version of the same eyes. Our new president was an alien...

A loud sullen sigh escapes my lips as my heavy eyelids softly trembled; peering open. This was not similar to any other nightmare I have had. I did not jolt awake with a pounding heart and a sweating nose bridge. On the contrary, I awoke in quiet awe... was this even a nightmare? I had secretly hoped not. Why? One may ask. Why...

I am a firm believer in veiled messages through dreams, and was convinced that I had cracked the ambiguity behind this particular one. My mind raced and was ravaged by conspiracies and wild explanations, but deep down, my heart understood. I pictured the alien's face: distorted, green, big oval-like transparent eyes, wide nostrils embedded in his slimy skin, pointy ears and carved chapped lips. I cringe at his disagreeable physique but still gawk at his presidential credentials.

His big oval-like transparent eyes saw the hurdles of the people, saw death and wars, saw famine and poverty. They saw the drainage of life from all that once blossomed. They saw the agony behind tight hugs that dripped with resentment and heartache at every airport gate. They saw trickling tears that coated the pale cheeks of the overworked. They saw the bloodshot eyes of the oblivious child. They glared at the once lively port and saw the ghostly presence of nothingness. They saw the vacant crime scene that paled and withered. They saw ashy faces carved on otherwise pointless containers. They saw a story of villainous injustice painted in bleached colors. They saw a mission and a purpose, for bleached is not the color they ought to remain. They wept angrily at those who came before them, but glistened at the thought of a tomorrow of novelty that they would behold.

His eyes saw his people, and his people saw his eyes. Behind his transparent pupils, one could see passion; passion for this land and longing for its resurrection... and eyes do not lie.

His wide nostrils smelled blood embedded in our soil, they smelled the stench of crime and injustice that lay in graveyards of those murdered in the name of Lebanon. They knew what death reeked of and longed to forget.

His pointy ears heard the deafening, heart-wrenching cries and pleads. They heard the whimpering of the hungry child and the blubbing of the cold elderly. They heard the hollering of the frustrated father and the bellowing of the drained mother. They heard the eerie whispers of the departed that pled for justice. They

heard the buzzer of crisis; they heard the burning need for instant salvage of this sunken nation.

His carved chapped lips pronounced not promises but plans. They did not feed gullible minds empty pledges, nor did they poison them with high-hope syndrome. They spoke with wisdom and empathy and chanted melodies of tangible revolution upon this nation.

His distorted, green, slimy face taught man not to read too deep into facades. It taught man impartiality and eradicated the notion of discrimination or even sectarianism that were once rooted in our superficially trivial small-mindedness. His magic lay not in his appearance- be it physical, social or financial. Contrarily, he ever so enchants Lebanon through his core of pure honesty and virtuous intentions.

All what he saw, smelled and heard engulfed his being and struck his heart with poignant electric shocks of incentive.

Now his hands, his veiny calloused hands induced change. They worked for the daunting aura of safety and the definite notion of a solid future. They worked for the reeling in of the estranged diaspora. They worked for the reinstatement of Lebanon as a powerful tourist-magnet with a booming economy. They worked for the extermination of fraud and exploitation. They worked for the resurgence of laughter and smiles. They worked and worked until they stamped off on a Lebanon of glee and freedom; a Lebanon of the living and not of the dead.

It may now seem clear that what I picture my new president to be is not verily a green-faced outlandish being after all. I do not want my president to be an alien to Earth itself. I want my president to be an alien to corruption, an alien to death, an alien to inequality, an alien to blood, an alien to crime, an alien to sectarianism, an alien to foreign influence, an alien to all Lebanon has ever known and agonizingly endured politically.

I do not want my president to be physically alien at all, indeed, I do not want him to be anything short of *human*. Human through emotions; a pumping heart that beats with his people and winces with his people. A human that sees the presidential chair as an opportunity to cater for this nation, and not for his own personal inflation. A human filled with courage, logic, leadership, kindness and generosity- true pillars of a commendable president- not one accredited by his infamous last name that supposedly deems him worthy.

I close my eyes again and tightly grab my blanket; images of bliss and flourishment flood my being with a sense of peculiar nostalgia. How was I to feel nostalgic towards a reality I had never before lived? I grinned to myself in knowing prospect of tomorrow. Nostalgia was not what I was bearing; I was not missing the past, but eyeing a future built on the merit of an extraterrestrial leader- not quite literally...