

To the Women of Lebanon

For the dead you bury, the unborn in your belly
For the bullet holes to be filled with candy in a child's body
For the children you bear and those who are no longer there
For the war shattered-homes and those you repair

For the oases you bring to the deserts of our lives
For the darkness and the despair, and the hope in your dark eyes
For the glimmer you bring to the lonely immigrant recess
For the conscience you hold in the midst of madness

For the veils you're made to wear and the fashions you craze
For the insults and the injuries, and the few words of praise
For the love you dispense against hatred and violence
For all the languages you speak over the code of silence

For the silent rapes and the glorious wedding nights
For the tears and the weeping, and the whispers and the songs
For the strikes and the hurts, and the caresses and the balms
For the gurgling blood and the elixir of love in your silky palms

For the last child home and others across the earth war did scatter
For the exiled lover, the fugitive husband, the disappeared brother
For the sister, the mother, the aunt, the teta and the cousin
For the teacher, the friend, the neighbor, and the mystery woman

For the civility you bring to the barbarians at the gates
For our failure and your triumph, our sin and your grace
For the battles and the heal, and the struggles and the pain
For the wanton rejection and the willful submission to the game

For not letting your country down when even God did
For walking us through the valley of death to green meadows beyond
We ask your forgiveness, your wisdom, and your sad eyes
We implore your spirits, your minds, your bodies, and your souls

Take us all back home to the stone houses our fathers' hands built
Take us to the vines and the pine trees behind that bend in the road
Take us down the tired city streets where as children we played
Take us to the village squares where old men and women wait

So that together, child by child, tree by tree, and stone by stone
With our own hands we rebuild that sweet sweet place we all call home

Joseph Hitti
Boston, 17 January 2004