

Letter to the World from Moria (No. 7)

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For a bread – for life

Life normally has ups and downs, but my life has always been flat. I have been trapped in a deep valley.

I am getting close to my life's end. At an age when every old woman needs to rest, I push my heart to work and earn money for my husband who suffers from heart problems and for our son.

Yet, instead of taking care of my husband's sickness, we must first prove his illness, they say. Our words don't count, but only papers. Do we need to take out his heart to show he is ill?

After many medical tests we undertook with many difficulties, they told us that his illness should be certified by the doctors of the big hospital. The name of his sickness has to be written in words on a paper. They didn't tell us, who will cover his transportation costs to go to town? Of course no one will!

When my husbands' heart suffered, I desired my death as I could not help with not even a cent in my pocket...

Days passed. I decided to build a tandoor (traditional oven) to bake bread and sell it. I thought, I could purchase the necessary ingredients by borrowing some money from one of our relatives, who had a cash card. Just fifty cents, that's all I needed! I touched the fifty cents and my old hands were shaking. Not just because of my old age. Not just because of my worry for my sick husband. They shook at the thought of the thousand year old olive tree that would burn in my tandoor. I trembled at the idea of the axe reaching the old tree. I could feel it crying out. Yet, I need fire to bake my bread. ...

But it is the rule of nature: eat or be eaten.

How many troubles have I faced in hope of today's bread to cure my husband? And I need a cure too. My heart burns at the thought of the felled burning trees. But I must ignore my heart, I must take care of my old husband. **I must bake the bread!**

With my old hands I shall prepare dough. Dough needs powerful arms, but my arms are weak and shaking. I will do it! I will wake up at 4:00am! First, I will read my prayers. Then I will start the dough. Flour, oil, salt, yeast and water. I will mix them all together. And then, I will let the dough rest. Once raised, I will cut out small shapes and let them rest again. By 7:00am the pieces will be ready for the tandoor.

My son walks far away into the hills to collect dry wood and start the fire. Oh, how the old trees turn into ashes. My son, instead of going to school, will go around trying to sell the bread when it's ready. From the early morning until the late evening he will call people to buy it. There are a lot of bakeries nowadays in Moria and selling is very difficult.

Hundreds of steps, hundreds of movements, a lot of sweat in respect of life, in respect of the bread and in respect of the trees.

This is our situation and this is how we spend our days. No one knows about it. No one can see. I have always been in the flat valley. No ups in my life. My voice, my cries will never be heard. They are old and weak. My shaking hands will be never held by a stronger hand. At this age, they still have to hold my family.

I want to be a friend of nature, not its enemy. I want to pass my last days with my family in rest, to have some comfort, to sit for days in the shadow of the trees, not to burn them. But life is very ruthless. Sometimes we people are obliged to do things we don't want to do. See what life forces us to do...

What if someone in this world would hold my hands, so I could become an ally of nature walking away from the deep valleys, up to the mountains and the sun?

Parwana