

The Sodomized Dictator

by Marcus Speh

In the night after the killing, Ali washes himself in a bowl. His wife comes close and takes his hands, slowly stroking them with hers. The bowl is filled with red water, but Ali is not bleeding. Something stands between them now, they both feel it but they don't know what to call it. It's not one of the ghosts that come from the desert to wake up the sleeping children and talk to them sometimes for hours. It's not a mere memory either, one of those old memories that wraps itself around their naked necks. It's not a thought of the brown sandy future, or a storm from Syracuse on the other side of the blueness. They touch each others' bare foreheads. —“What is it?” says his wife almost without a voice, and Ali says: “It's a volcano. It's opened under our very feet.” — “We must stop it,” she says. “It can't be stopped,” says Ali, “get the children. Let's sit together under a green blanket and pray.”

