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On a **Winter's Day**



(**at War**)

séamas carraher

Cover Image*Kurdish YPG Fighter*

By Kurdishstruggle

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**On a Winter’s Day
(at War)***for the people (and refugees)*of **Afrin Region,****the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria - Rojava**

*“Let Erdoğan come and look at the children he has killed. We will stay in our land till
the last drop of blood.”***Mustafa Hesén**, Co-president of Afrin Canton<https://www.globalrights.info/2018/01/turkey-not-condemned-enough-for-rojava-invasion/>*“Children of the world,
if Spain falls - I mean, it’s just a thought-
...if mother
Spain falls - I mean, it’s just a thought-
go out, children of the world, go look for her!...
(Spain, Take this Cup from Me)
Cesar Vallejo, October 1937*

On a Winter's Day (at War)

i

On the cold dark winter's day
they buried Dolores O Riordan
in Ballybricken
German Leopard (2A4) tanks
and steel sharp jets
tore the guts out of another 4 villages
in Afrin Canton, in Rojava, Northern Syria

in Rojava, blood-red Rojava
where the people build freedom
brick by brick
day after day,
out of dust and sand and rubble
- out of their dead

in Rojava, Kurdistan
land of Arin Mirkan (of
Deilar Genj Khamis)
land of the singer Viyan Peyman
(Gulistan Tali Cingal) who sang
"oh mother!
*Today again our Kurdish boys and girls
have made their chests into shields
against the tanks and bombs
Oh, mother, woe to me!"*
then went out and died, Jazira Canton,
Monday, April 6th, 2015...
Land of Hameera Muhammed, of Berivan Fadhil,
of Ruhan Hassan,
land now drowning in blood,
Rojava, red Rojava, where our revolution
begins each day
- at daybreak.

On this dark winter's day
with armoured and non-armoured military vehicles
(*KIRPI, the mine-resistant-ambush-protected vehicle,*

and AKINCI the armored combat vehicle)
with NATO weapons and German tanks
with fighter jets and warplanes
with shell and mortar fire,
with cameras, radar, weapons and ammunition,
with their big fat T-155 Firtina (Storm) howitzers
(now raining fire *near Reyhanli and Kirikhan districts*)
"can shoot targets within the range of 40 kilometers"
- 24.8 fucking miles away,
the Turkish General Staff tells us, proudly,
with their helicopters and their rockets
with their *T-122 Multiple Barrel Rocket Launchers (MRBL)*,
with their drones and their knives
and their reptilian brains

*with their bombs and their tanks and
their guns*

on this twice dark winter's day
like the day before ISIS came to Manbij, or Kobane or Raqqa
the day before the Turks came for the Armenians
the day before the rapist Daesh came for the Yazidi women
the day before dead Saddam came north for the Kurds
the day before Mount Sinjar
the day before Mosul,
the day before...
and the day after...
and every fucking day after that...

on this dark day,
O, all i could see
(with my teeth clenched tight)
all i could say
and all i could do,
all i could dream
(all i could whisper, sweetheart
in rage and in terror)
and all I could pray
was

*in yer head in yer fucken head
in yer heeeeeeaadd...in yer head...*

Dolores, O Dolores!
- all our dead.

ii

The sound of these killer jets
 (like children crying in the dark)
 keeps me awake at night
 like the pain of the dead
 does too
 as if the dead could feel it all
*with their tanks and their bombs
 and their bombs and their guns...*
 even here on Thomas Street
 and James Street
 - as i walked out
 not a sound could sigh in this silence
 - as i walked out
 not a flag lowered its lament,
 just these cold sharp prayers
 like bullets for the dead
 just the rain
 like steel shrapnel,
 just this fire burning here for our dreams
 and another one, there, lit with corpses
 and another, louder than death, like
 all brothers-and-sisters-in-arms
 now sacrificed

in the distance then,
 sacrificed, incinerated, slaughtered...*martyred*
 and my head in a mess and
 O, your beautiful voice bleeding, Dolores,
 over and over, over and over
in yer head
in yer fucken head

- our lament for all these
 Syrian dead...

iii

On a dead dark winter's day
 the day the killer airplanes came to Afrin,
 this desperate-day and
 this destructive day and this
 damaged day,
 this day of the children and
 in villages across the Turkish border
 in Kurdistan, sad Kurdistan
 in Balbala, Raju, Jinderis,
 in Shia and Shara,
 in Cindirês district and its dwellings
 in Hemam village,
*where 6 civilians were martyred
 16 wounded,
 two hundred and eighty nine civilians now, all martyred
 hundreds wounded*
 sacrificed
 incinerated
 slaughtered
 massacred,
 erased for all time
 and all the dead denounced
 in Erdoğan's propaganda
"Turkey 'neutralizing' PYD/PKK terrorists."

Shame on you!

But in my head, O, here in my head
"there are women and children among the massacred"
 like 11-year-old Yahya Ahmad,
*"an #IDP who fled from the violence in Idlib with his family
 and to #Afrin,
 died after being heavily injured in Turkish air strikes today."*
*"One-year old Wael al-Hussein, a refugee from the village
 of Jebbarah,
 killed on 21 January,
 Six-year old Moussab al-Hussein, refugee
 Six-year old Salama Al Hussain
 Eight year old Ghaliya Al Hussain
 Ten year old Hadil Al Hussain
 Ahmed Al Hussian, 17 years old".*
 All brothers and sisters in a life without mercy
 in this unholy life,
 now Rahaf Al Hussain, father to orphans
 and a widow, dead now himself, at 33 years.
 Thirty-three-years-old.
 O, what a day to be buried, Dolores.

iv

The day they buried poor Dolores
 in her father's grave
 in a Limerick graveyard
 west of the River Shannon
 and south where the sea
 can still sing
 11 Kurdish children were buried in brick and rubble,
 3 uncles burned alive,
 1 brother and a sister torn in two,
 this family of 7 murdered, massacred,
 martyred in their home
 ("at around 04:00, Turkish warplanes bombed Mabata district centre.
 One of the bombs hit a family house killing seven")
 three grandmothers decapitated
 while Turkish President 'In Yer Head'
 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
 dances round the fire
 "terrorists, terrorists"
 "3,820 terrorists" all dead (in Turkish too:
 "teröristler teröristlerin hepsi ölü")
 and still Dolores sang:
 "In your head, in your head
 Zombie, zombie, zombie
 Hey, hey
 What's in your head, in your head
 Zombie, zombie, zombie
 Hey, hey, hey, oh
 Dou, dou, dou, dou
 Dou, dou, dou, dou
 Dou, dou, dou, dou
 Dou, dou, dou, dou."

in yer head in yer fucken head
 Tayyip Erdoğan
with yer guns and yer tanks and yer bombs
in yer head in your fucken head

- you can't kill us all.

v

On the day they buried
 sad Dolores
 six feet in the ground
 on that cold dark day
 they buried Dolores
 the day we all wept
 like angels
 looking for a job,
 thousands of miles away
 and down a dusty road
 and behind that wall of steel
 and with barrels of money to burn
 and with their poison
 and sharper than their knives
 and more cruel than a politician's
 corpse-like word
 and dirtier than the depths of a sewer
 and more rotten than those bodies
 left in the sun:
 25,000 thousand armed thugs
 (the Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement,
 the Al Nusra Front,
 and Ahrar Al Sham,
 ...but
 "one of our women is worth a hundred of their men"
 said the YJA)
 and 10 thousand terrified Turkish troops
 a few generals and
 a lot of unemployed conscripts...

on the day Dolores went to sleep
 fighter jets bombed the Raco and Moseka hills of Rojava
 men and women died
 on Batman hill and the Baxtiyar hill
 on the Iska Hill

in yer head in yer head
 Kurd, Armenian, Irish, and Negro
in your head, O, in your head
In your head they're still fightin'

- now it feels like the end.

vi

On an evening after Dolores slept
and didn't wake up
and the sun went down
on Ballybricken
and storm Eleanor came in
off the Atlantic
and no one stirred a muscle,
where the stray dogs and the cats
on Thomas Street and
on James Street
went on the run
and all the beggars and
all the drinkers fell asleep
and with the phones in my ears
and these ghosts in my brain
and my eyes nearly blind

how my mind can still fly
like a bird
over villages
i have never seen
over mountains
and houses
and ones i will never see now
and all i could hear was
*with their tanks and their bombs
and their bombs and their guns
in your head,*

in your head they are cryin'

and all i could howl
all i could scream
and all i could surrender
all i could embrace
and all i could hope
and all i could hate
and all these two-faced lyin' politicians
and these generals
*(Turkey Lt. Gen. İsmail Metin Temel
Operations chief commander
Maj. Yasser Abdul Rahim
Sham Legion commander
Lt. Col. Muhammad Hamadin
Third Legion and Levant Front commander
Abu Muslim
Levant Front commander, Fahim Eissa*

Second Legion commander...)
and all these ghouls and these zombies
and with their words
choking in my throat

*in yer head in yer fucken head
In your head they're still fightin'
was all i heard*

- O
what will you do when
there's no one left to bury the dead?

vii

And here where nothing will ever work again
 where not a single child will be brought back from
 the dead
 where no Christ will be resurrected
 where freedom is still a dream

O, here at the dog's end of James Street
 at the dogend of my life (and your life too),
 here at the homeless heartbroken end
 of Thomas Street
 here at this collision among the Empires
 here where no one is safe, not me, nor you
 not your children, your grandmother, your lover,
 here in the dream that Rojava is
 here in the land of the Kurds
 here where we are all Kurds
 and Yazidi, Assyrian and Armenian
 all Irish
 all dead
 all resurrected

all fucking dead
 year after year
 over and over
 i thought

here
 where hope is nailed to a cross
 again
 and again
 here, soldier, is the land
 the lonely land
in yer head
in your fucken head.

viii

And all i could say
 or think or feel
 all I could hope
 or ache or yearn
 all I could grieve or cry
 all i could endure

O,
 all i could choke
 cursed with these men in their diplomatic suits
 cursed with these cruel men in their cheap suits
 with their politicians and their diplomats
 with their generals and their medals
 with their guns and their planes
 and their bombs
 all i could say
 while we waved Dolores goodbye
 while a hard hot rain fell on Afrin
 and while the life we loved
 fled with these corpses
 while my blood went cold
 while these young men and women
 went off to war
 while the jets kept buzzing overhead
 in their shiny polished suits
 in their steel and their murder
 in their arrogance and pride
 with fire and with bullets
 all i could cry
 all i could dream
 was

in yer head, in your head
in
all
your
fucken
heads

you blind, two-faced, lyin'
 murderin' politician
sons of bitches
 with your fucking tanks and your guns
 and your bombs
 with your lasers and your radar
 and your wretched wicked lives...

On your head, now.
 So be it!

séamas carraher
 24 January, 4.30am - 5 April 2018

References

Dolores Mary Eileen O’Riordan (6 September 1971 – 15 January 2018) the Irish singer, songwriter, musician and survivor, from The Cranberries, who was named after our Lady of Sorrows (Mater Dolorosa) was born in Ballybricken, County Limerick, near where she was buried, in Caherelly Graveyard, 3 days after the murderous Turkish invasion into the **The Democratic Federation of Northern Syria – Rojava**. She died unexpectedly at the Hilton hotel on Park Lane in Mayfair at the age of 46, while in London for a recording session. She was buried alongside her father in the grave he rested in, Caherelly Graveyard at Friarstown, County Limerick.

Zombie

“Zombie” is a protest song, lyrics and chords of “Zombie” were written by Dolores O’Riordan during the Cranberries’ English Tour in 1993. Written about the 1993 IRA bombing in Warrington, and in memory of two young English victims, Johnathan Ball (3 years old) and Tim Parry (12). It was released in September 1994 as the lead single from their second studio album, No Need to Argue (1994).

*Another head hangs lowly
Child is slowly taken
And if violence causes the silence
Who are we mistaking
But you see it’s not me
It’s not my family
In your head in your head
They are fighting*

*With their tanks and their bombs
And their bombs and their guns
In your head in your head they are crying*

*In your head
In your head
Zombie zombie zombie ei ei
What’s in your head
In your head*

Zombie, zombie, zombie ei, ei, ei, oh do do do do do do do do do

*Another mother’s breaking heart is taking over the violence causes silence
We must be mistaken
It’s the same old thing since nineteen-sixteen
In your head in your head
Their still fighting
With their tanks and their bombs
And their bombs and their guns
In your head in your head they are dying*

*In your head
In your head
Zombie zombie zombie ei ei
What’s in your head*

*In your head
Zombie, zombie, zombie ei, ei, ei, oh do do do do do do do do do*

Video:

The Cranberries - Zombie “Beneath the Skin” Live concert at the Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy 1999 Paris, France, Dolores O’Riordan - Vocals, Guitar Noel Hogan - Guitar Mike Hogan - Bass Guitar Fergal Lawler – Drums

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MuhFxaT7zo>

César Vallejo (March 16, 1892 – April 15, 1938): *Spain, Take This Cup from Me*

The poet’s 15 poem long-poem of lament and revolt at the fascist advance against Spain’s (*Segunda República Española* 1931 to 1939) republican democracy...

Arin Mirkan was a commander in the YPJ who died fighting ISIS in Kobane on October 5 2014; 20 (or 22) years old and a mother of two, when Kurdish fighters had been forced to withdraw from a strategic hill south of Kobane she stayed behind, attacking ISIS militants as they surrounded her. She eventually detonated explosives attached to her body, killing 10 enemy fighters.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arin_Mirkan
<http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/in-praise-of-arin-mirkan/15976>

Viyan Peyman, a poet and a singer, and fighter was killed in a battle with ISIS on April 6th, 2015 near Serekaniye, a town also known as Ras al-Ayn in northern Syria. She was killed by small arms fire while fighting from trenches in fields west of Serekaniye.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/viyan-peyman-female-kurdish-fighter-killed-battling-isis-n339566>

Video:

Viyan Peyman - Kobane 2015
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scsUc_el93A

Viyan Peyman/Gulistan Tali Cingalo
<https://rebelbreeze.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/kurdish-singer-and-fighter-viyan-peyman-falls-in-battle/>

Ruhan Hassan, Hameera Muhammed, and Berivan Fadhil were Kurdish “female fighters who died helping to wrest control of the town (Kobane) from Isis”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/30/kurdish-women-died-kobani-isis-syria>

22-year-old **Berivan Fadhil**, who spent 8 months training in a military camp to become a YPJ fighter, was killed by a suicide car bomb while advancing towards ISIS positions.

Hameera Muhammed, the mother of five children that had been taken away from her when she struggled after her husband was killed by a sniper in Aleppo. Hameera was killed when an ISIS mortar hit a building that she and other fighters had been sheltering in.

22-year-old **Shireen Taher**, who joined the YPJ after her father had been killed by an ISIS car bomb. During the siege, her family received a phone call from an ISIS jihadist calling from her cellphone. After asking to speak to Shireen’s mother, he told her that she needed to come and collect her daughter’s head.

19-year-old, **Ruhan Hassan**, who had been at the western front with three other YPJ fighters, firing against ISIS until they ran out of ammunition. Not wanting to be taken prisoners by ISIS and the certain horrors that would result, they used their last hand grenades to kill themselves.

<http://www.dsw-photo.com/Travel/To-The-Frontlines-Against-ISIS/Part-II>

The Yazidis

“The Yazidis are a majority-Kurdish-speaking religious group living mostly in northern Iraq. They number less than one million worldwide. The Yazidis, throughout their history, have been persecuted as infidels by Muslim rulers who demanded that they convert. Rather than formal ceremonies, their religious practice involves visiting sacred places. Yazidis participate in baptism and feasts, sing hymns and recite stories. Some of the stories are about historical and mythical battles fought in protection of the religion. Others, told over the centuries by generations of women, detail methods of resistance to the same threats that Yazidi women face today.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/25/slaves-of-isis-the-long-walk-of-the-yazidi-women>

One of the first images to reach us from Afrin in January 2018:



Almost 300 civilians are estimated to have been killed by the Turkish invasion. **Yahya Ahmed Hamada**, was already a refugee from Idlib; he was killed in the province of Afrin at the age of 11, on 20th January, (one day into the Turkish invasion), after being injured by the bombing of the Turkish military air force (Turkish Air Force F-16 jets) on the territory of Afrin...

(<https://anfenglish.com/features/turkey-commits-a-crime-against-humanity-in-afrin-24557> & <http://www.kurdishinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Afrin-File-1-12.pdf>)

Casualties

First 4 Days

<https://anfenglish.com/features/turkey-commits-a-crime-against-humanity-in-afrin-24557>

Turkish Statement:

“A total of 3,820 terrorists have been “neutralized” since the start of Operation Olive Branch in Syria’s Afrin region, the Turkish military said in a statement on Saturday”. (31 March 2018)

<https://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/3-820-terrorists-neutralized-in-afrin-op/1104464>

Wikipedia: Casualties

Various casualty estimates were made during the operation. The pro-Syrian opposition activist organization the SOHR documented 1,506 SDF and 463 TFSA fighters were killed, as well as 91 pro-Syrian government militiamen, 80 Turkish soldiers and 289 civilians. The SCWM site reported the death of 783 SDF and 676 TFSA fighters, 58 Turkish soldiers, 51 pro-Syrian government militiamen and 564 civilians.

Turkey claimed 3,872 SDF fighters were killed, wounded or captured. Pro-Turkish sources also reported the deaths of 318 TFSA fighters, 52 Turkish soldiers, one civilian worker and 7–9 civilians in Turkey. According to the SDF, 1,648 TFSA fighters and Turkish soldiers were killed, while they themselves lost 820 fighters. The SDF also reported 500 civilians and 62 pro-Syrian government militiamen were killed.

According to the United Nations, the Turkish operation displaced 167,000 people as of 23 March 2018, up from 5,000 people in January 2018. Between 50,000 and 70,000 civilians still remained in Afrin city.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_military_operation_in_Afrin#Casualties
<https://syriancivilwarmap.com/syria-death-toll>



<http://www.seamascarraher.blogspot.ie/>

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