

Mom! Are they Toys or Apples?

*A memoir of childhood, courage,
and the fight for freedom.*

DRAKSHAN ALI



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To my little heroes

Hemn, Lawin, Handren, Zheen

Oh lofty mountains! Listen to my Dyspnea,
To my aching chest!

Drakhshan Ali

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Contents

Shaqlawā Landscape.....	1
Early Uprising.....	14
The Breakout of Revolution in 1987.....	22
The Six Huge Black Helicopters.....	27
The 22nd of May, 1987, Shaqlawa Mass Uprising.....	36
<i>Dari Azadi, the Poem of the Tree of Freedom</i>	41
The Conspiracy of the Statistics, The Gloomy Day.....	50
Life in the Village of Ashkafta.....	65
The Arduous Withdrawal towards Dola Koga, the Border of Iran in 1988, across Qandil Mountain.....	68
Appendix 1 – The Poems.....	76
1987 Spring.....	76
Innocent Smiles.....	81
The Cry in my Womb.....	84
A Token to Gullan.....	88
Appendix 2 – Translations of Local Scripts.....	91
A Bleeding Afternoon.....	91
Translation of the Article of Haider Abdulla.....	93
The Patriotic Kurdish Lady with Beautiful Attitudes.....	95
Enlightened Local Person of Shaqlawa.....	98
Previous Shaqlawa.....	100

Shaqlawa Landscape

I was born in Shaqlawa, on 4th of December, 1952. It is a town 50 kilometers north of Erbil City, capital city of the Province of Federal Kurdistan of Iraq. I call it a green valley oasis, as it lies between two beautiful mountains, *Sork* (red in colour) and *Safin* mountain.



Figure 1. Mountain *Safin* in Shaqlawa.



Figure 2. Mountain *Sork* (the red mountain) in Shaqlawa.

Beneath the towering peaks of Safin mountain, in the green valley of Shaqlawa, a young woman watched her town rise against oppression. Between orchards and icy springs, Drakhshan Ali's life in Shaqlawa was marked by both beauty and struggle - the laughter of friends, the stories of her grandmother, and the thunder of revolution echoing through the hills.

Through her eyes, we see a nation's longing for dignity and fight for freedom. From the warmth of home fires to the turmoil of uprisings, her memories become a powerful reflection on justice, resilience, and the unbreakable bond between people and their homeland.

A lyrical and courageous testament to place, family, and the power of truth – told with clarity, compassion, and defiance by Drakhshan Ali.



Drakhshan Ali

Drakhshan Ali was born in Shaqlawa, in the mountains of Kurdistan. A lifelong teacher, writer, and storyteller, she has dedicated her life to education, equality, and the power of words. Through her vivid memories and compassionate voice, she preserves the spirit of her homeland and the resilience of its people — sharing a story that bridges generations and speaks to the universal fight for justice and freedom.

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