

## **Lamie'ah Abbas Imara and the Bitter-Sweet Craft of Poetry**

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Received: 11/21/2022

Accepted: 02/09/2023

Published: 02/24/2023

### **Abstract**

The Iraqi poet, Lamie'ah Abbas Imara (1929-12021) is one of the problematic figures in the 1950s-1960s whose relations with cultural and artistic names in her time raised endless controversy. Some critics find that most of her poetry is confessional and that her poems are written in direct, sometimes shocking, language without any need for a mediator or interpreter. The present paper discusses two tasks simultaneously. The major part rests in giving a translation of five of her major poems written in different times. The other point centers on giving a brief account of this polarizing figure in modernist poetry in Iraq and her attitude toward the craft of poetry in its advantages and disadvantages. The purpose of this paper is to have a perceptive view of this poet and her type of poetry. The themes she dealt with throughout her long career are key points here. Further, the article seeks to find out the reasons that keep scholars and critics away from her work, for all its particularity and grace. The conclusion shows how Lamie'ah deals with her poetry and its specific features when compared to that of her contemporaries.

**Key Words:** displacement, , lamie'ah Abbas Imara, Iraqi poetry, love, passion

**Cite as:** Sultan, S. S. (2023). Lamie'ah Abbas Imara and the Bitter-Sweet Craft of Poetry *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies* 7 (1). 33-45.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol7no1.3>

## 1. Introduction

The life and experiences of Lamie'ah Abbas Imara represent an inexhaustible material for biographers and researchers who longed to know more about her experiences during her academic study and the romantic love affairs she was involved in, whether real or feigned. She belongs to the Mandaean religion, and the members of this very old religion chose to live nearby the rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) in the south of Iraq. Indeed, she spent her early youth in the southern city of Imara, which has become her surname. The first thing one notices in lamie'ah's oeuvre is the striking absence of serious criticism written by the poet and those writing about her works. Actually, since her graduation in 1955 from the College of Education (Arabic Department) in Baghdad, she has occupied some jobs that have got nothing to do with teaching or research. Obviously she was quite content with writing poetry in standard Arabic or even vernacular. The interview held by Nash (2018) with the poet shows Lamie'ah's conception of poetry writing and its high costs:

Nash: What about the woman-poet?

Lamie'ah :

I think woman should either choose the task of rearing children and caring household affairs or composing poetry. It is very difficult to combine these two activities at the same time. For example, I spent four years exclusively for a poem titled 'the Empty Corner.' It left a negative effect on the male audience attending the event'. (Nash, 2018).

This cogent answer on the part of the poet is already there in her volume of verse titled, *The Empty Corner* (1959) when the author devotes two pages to a few lines written in bold type:

Woman is one of two types: either an artist who devotes her life to her hobby or a mother taking care of her children. I have chosen to live my life, not to be immortalized after my death. Therefore the poetry corner remains empty. (*The Empty Corner*, 1959,p.55)

Why did a poem like 'The Empty Corner' stir such indifferent judgments that filled Lamie'ah's heart with distress and pain? As a leftist, poet Lamie'ah puts herself in the position of female beggar and traces the reactions of people as they pass her indifferently and haughtily:

امس توسدت رصيف الجسر Yesterday I slept on the bridge pier.

اعد بالاقدام عمر الدهر By feet I count the age of eternity.

خطى ثقلى خدرت بالخمير Heavy steps were doped by liquor.

اخرى سراع ما درت من امري Other steps are fast, and are not aware of me.

ياسيدي من لي بالحياء؟ Sir, what do I benefit from shyness?

نمت وما امتدت الى انائي يد I slept and there was no single hand stretched to my plate.

ولا اسعدت في مسائي and I was not cheered up in my evening.

ياسيدي من لي بالحياء؟ Sir, what do I benefit from shyness ?

طوفت في المقهى من الدخان I went on cruising with smoke from the café.  
 اهيب بالرحمة بالاحسان I beseech kindness...charity  
 لو يدرك المذياح ما اعاني If the radio were to know my suffering  
 لجمدت في وجهه الاغاني Songs would freeze in its face  
 (Imarah, *The Empty Corner*, pp.52-3)

This poem is not about romantic love and sweeping emotions as will be shown in the main part of this article. It is about the missing social cooperation and help that should be activated among the slices of society, any society. It seems that poet Lamie'ah comes to the conclusion that writing poetry is virtually useless as she inferred from the reactions of her audience as well as the unfortunate destinies of her peers like Badr Shakir Al Sayyab (1926-1964) or Hussein Mardan (1927-1972). However, in contrast to her colleagues, she does not write critical judgments and views about the art of writing poetry and its effects on readers. Instead, she sought to deal with this problem poetically in writing about the validity or invalidity of composing poetry, summarizing the shillyshallying of the poet and her inability to release herself from its harmful fist. This is a metapoetic work par excellence:

### براءة Renouncing

لعنة اللاعنين يا شاعر عليك O flagrant curse upon you, poetry.  
 ما الذي اوقعني بين يديك؟ What made me fall in your clutches?  
 كل اسرار الورى مكتومه All the secrets of people are concealed,  
 وخفي الهمس مفضوح لديك. And the most hidden whispers are debunked by you.  
 كم سبيل هربا لذنابنا How many ways to which we resorted to evade  
 ولمحنا في الحنايا مقانيتك and we had a glimpse of your eye balls in the corners.  
 دعك مني اكل جرح قاتل Leave me alone! Every fatal injury,  
 كل بؤس جاء يقفو خطوتك every misery comes following your steps.  
 انت لو كنت صلاحا وهدى If you had been righteousness and guidance,  
 ما توسلنا بشيطان اليك We would not have beseeched a demon for you.

What is striking about this poem is its conclusive line about the intercession of the demon in finalizing any poem. The way she views the demon differs greatly from the common concept held about it in other cultures which can be stated in one phrase: impossibility to escape its authority. In his poem, 'The Poetry Demon', the Tiantai monk Gushan Zhiyuan (976-1022) depicts his impulse to versify as an interruption of his evening religious prayer:

My chan mind is fixed by the poetry demon.  
 "The moon cold and a gentle breeze"—what to do about it?  
 All night I try to subdue [the demon, but] I cannot!  
 A horde of [Mara's] minions come and come. (Protass, 2021, p.1)

In fact, Lamie'ah's oscillation between pursuing the act of composing poetry or ridding herself of its pressures and commitments is a key point in the poet's career. Hardly does she ignore the dilemma she finds herself passing through and how difficult is the means of evading it, once and for all. In the dedication to her major work, *If the Fortune Teller Told me* (1980) she writes few words highlighting the difficulty of composing poetry and the equal difficulty of escaping its harmful impact :

كل شعري All my poetry

قبل لقياك سدى Before meeting you was in vain,

وهباء كل ما كتبت And totally useless was all what I have written.

اطو اشعاري Fold my poems

واركنها جانبا And leave them aside.

Approach me since I have begun today. (*If the Fortuneteller Told me*, 1980, p.5)

The dilemma of pursuing the act of composing poetry or ending its troubles which many people may appreciate can be felt through the long periods of silence. Of course, this is not the consequence of what is often called the writer's block as seen in the case of Britain's outstanding poet, S.T. Coleridge, who determined to give up writing poetry and devoting all his time to literary criticism. Lamie'ah's problem is due to other reasons as she found herself from 1978 onwards in a continuous state of displacement and expatriation in USA and other countries. Under such circumstances, poetry or any type of creative writing, for that matter, cannot compensate the direct and heartfelt contacts with relatives, friends and compatriots.

If Lamie'ah manifested a great extent of courage in expressing the sentiments and even instincts of woman in an unparalleled way, the same holds true to her wise decision of abandoning the act of writing poetry altogether. Al Hilli(2012) in his insightful essay titled ' Lamie'ah Abbas Imara Divorces Poetry while Fake Poets Multiply' explains the poet's last and wise step in abandoning poetry:

In a fine educational and literary precedent attributed to the pioneering poet Lamie'ah Abbas Imara, she announced recently (2012) in a festival held by the Mandaean community in the United States where she was residing, that she divorced poetry after a union that lasted for seven decades.

Does the volcano of Lamie'ah's poetry become dormant all of a sudden? Is it true that poetry no longer puts up with her and that she herself was fed up with poetry ?

Anyway, she proclaimed her decision of retreating from poetry while she was at the summit of her poetic brilliance and fine presence in the map of Iraqi and International poetry.(Al Hilli, 2012)

### 1.1.Lamie'ah Abbas Imara and Passionate Love:

Lamie'ah's poetry is inextricably associated with love , both physical and romantic. The female poets of her generation usually refrained from going too far in depicting man-woman relation.

They used to be content with allusion, suggestion and expressive gestures which the discerning reader might figure out and get the message or point. In sharp contrast, Lamie'ah challenged her static and traditional society in Iraq in the 1950s and early 1960s and expressed herself directly to be the peer of male poets amidst incompatible views and judgments about its validity or acceptability. A glaring example of her revolutionary poetry about man-woman relationship is crystalized in her poem titled *خاطره* (Literary Reflection). Only a brief stanza is adequate for showing the poetry she is after:

احتاج اليك حبيبي الليله	My love, I need you tonight
فالليله روعي فرس وحشيه	as tonight my soul is a wild mare.
اوراق البردي	Papyrus leaves are
اضلاعي فقتها	my ribs, break them to pieces.
اطلق هذه اللغه المنسيه	Release this forlorn language
جسدي لا يحمل الوجد	My body cannot sustain overwhelming love.
ولا انوي اصبح رابعه العدويه	as I do not intend to become Rabi'a al-Adawiya.

The last name in this stanza (Rabi'a al-Adawiya 717-801) needs some elaboration as she was one of the pioneers of Islamic mysticism. She achieved a great reputation through her divine love and full devotion to its commitments and commands.

The sensual diction in the above-mentioned stanza is the hallmark of this poem and its physical content. What made poet Lamie'ah choose this iconoclastic way of dealing with social issues, particularly man-woman relationship? In his illuminating article, Noori (2020) adds his own judgments regarding the significant contribution of Lamie'ah in terms of content and form. His argument can be summed up in the following statement:

Lamie'ah made a clear change in poetry through her assertion of the concept of freedom. She was the voice of woman; she was very courageous in dealing with woman as a subject. She challenged old-fashioned conventions and invested her courage to defy the masculinity of society, its supremacy and bullying of women's rights. [worldofculture 2020 com/?p= 51959](http://worldofculture2020.com/?p=51959).

Noori adds a sort of coda to his essay when he evokes classical references which Lamie'ah's poem suggests: "The author revolts and divulges what is ignoble and empathizing with pretty Calipso who craved Odysseus".(2020)

The striking sense of the poet's courage engages a great space in the arguments and judgments of the researchers who have written about Lamie'ah's poetry and its distinct tone that does not resemble any poet of her generation. Ameen's lamentation titled 'The Passing away of Poet Lamie'ah: Death of the Magic of the Poem'(2021) gives an account of the poet's contribution

to the modernist poem and how her work is entirely her own. He has the following to say in this regard:

The late poet's work is marked by distinction from the rest of Arab poets of her generation. Courage or defiance is the term that qualifies her work appropriately in dealing with the question of masculinity as seen through her seven volumes of verse. She was a loud voice in defending women's rights. In dealing with men, her tone is marked by wit and motherly femininity rather than the discourse of the lover to his beloved. [Hafryat.com/ar/blog](http://Hafryat.com/ar/blog). Retrieved December, 10,2022.

The culminating view presented by Al Allaq (2022) titled ' Lamie'ah Abbas Imara: The poem and its surrounding' *Al Quds Al Arabi*, December, 16, is one that combines the creative and critical elements. It is a judgment that is neither biased nor derogatory. AL Allaq is a poet of prose poem and a perceptive critic. For this reason, the main argument of his paper will be translated here in some detail:

Al Allaq (2022 ) states that while he was about to introduce poet lamie'ah to his students, he asked her whether it is possible for his students to ask about Al Sayyab-Lamie'ah relationship. She answered me about this question by mingling funny and sweet silence. There was a cloud passing through her eyes as if she were mixing the thing and its antithesis, leaving for her looks to express what she does not allow in her direct and graceful language :

The late poet succeeded in creating her own myth, a myth hinging on the simplicity of language which is exclusively her own. She is the jovial female, yuppie and desirable. This drives men to entertain some illusions, without specifying any one. In short, her unbound body and supple voice has an immense ability to produce cunning suggestion, whispering clamor, the whispering that is capable of being totally rhetorical. Also her eyes, as in the case of Sumerian carvings, leave a great effect on the audience she *addresses.alquds.co.uk*.December,16,2022.

Finally to round off this section, one can say that no matter how Lamie'ah's poetry is viewed, there is some common consent among practitioners of poetry and researchers or reviewers that throughout her long career, Lamie'ah has presented specific kinds of verse , capable of evoking and igniting the tender feelings of readers and specialists alike.

Salman(2022) finds out the following elements in Lamie'ah's poetry:

Lamie'ah succeeded in weaving the threads of great joy in the fields of love and all types of pleasure in touching the hearts of lovers and extracting what is nostalgic in their hearts in order to draw joy in the faces of lovers (p.227).

### 1.1.11Lamie'ah Abbas Imara and Literary Criticism: The Paradoxical Relationship

Amidst these various and sometimes incompatible types of writing and the reasons and justifications for adopting such methods, Lamie'ah chose a line of her own in that she dispensed with the mythological references borrowed from Western tradition, particularly by Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Al Sayyab's work capitalized a lot on this type of poetry in that he benefited from the

strategies and devices in Western literature such as mythology, symbolism, suggestive language and rereading history in accordance with the data of our present times and experiences. In contrast, Abdel Wahhab Al Bayyati(1926-1999) benefited from mysticism and eastern thought in engrafting his poetry and its fresh techniques. Lamie'ah did not adopt any of these devices in her own work. So the cultural background of her poetry is hybrid in that she resorted to a multiplicity of devices and means to give her poem a special flavor. We have already seen some representative examples of her work which indicate unequivocally that we are in the presence of a writer who is fully rooted in the Mesopotamian soil from whose tradition she drew her poetry and its imagery. She did not refrain from borrowing the songs, hymns, lullabies, and traditional chanting of fighters as they head to battles. Because of her lack of a strict and well-defined ideology in composing her poetry from the beginning up to the end, critics often made do with personal impressions that do not dig deep in the essence of her poetry. Her charismatic figure and impressive voice as well as her excessive self-confidence drove critics to judge her work in a way quite different from those they usually follow in their writings.

Accordingly, one can easily notice that there a striking lack of criticism about her work. A good example is the list of references to the present article. All of them are either essays from the web, newspapers or academic theses. What is missing in her case is the presence of weighty and influential books written about her as in the case of her contemporaneous poets and their achievements.

In a rare interview held with the poet and journalist, Abdel Razzaq Al Rubayi, titled ‘ Lamie'ah Abbas Imara Face to Face with Abdel Razzaq Al Rubayi,23.7/2021, the reader is given a glimpse of what is going on between the creative writer and critics whose world is no less beguiling than creative writers. Journalist Abdel Razzaq starts the dialogue as follows :

Don't you feel that criticism has been unfair to you?

Yes, even though a physicist from Canada named Dr. Yousuf Marwah wrote a book on my poetry titled ‘ Cosmic Dimensions in Lamie'ah's Poetry’.

What is the reason in your opinion?

This is because of simple reasons that everybody should know. It is the fact that I do not adulate or flatter critics. I have never offered a book as a gift to a critic. Neither a group or sect or association of studies and criticism introduced me to critics. In fact criticism is offered haphazardly to meaningless poems about which he/she assumes all types of meanings. This kind of criticism will not elevate the poem nor will it rise to the position of real criticism.( worldof culture 2020 com/?p=51953 )

Obviously poet Lamie'ah has full confidence and faith in the type of poetry she has written and left a good impression on her readers and auditors in particular. The theoretical and abstract views and analyses are beyond the interests of the poet, a point that can be considered as a merit or demerit depending on the perspective used in perceiving the poem and its tricky world.

## 2. Main Argument

The essential discussion about the nature, particularity and distinction of Lamie'ah's poetry, has already received its due attention. Although she has enjoyed the company of poets who would engage a prime position in cultural life in Iraq and the Arab world (free verse) writers, she is endowed with the ability and zeal to choose her own path in composing poetry. Obviously she is an individualist who feels that her writing should be different from the rest. Thematically speaking, her poetry emphasized love and romance as recurrent topics that cannot escape the attention of the discerning and prudent reader. Moreover, there is striking simplicity which any reader can comprehend. The diction of her poems is simple, direct and avoids any needless complexity or artificiality. As such, people respond positively to her poetic writing and find in her different volumes some of their suppressed desires and dreams. This is one of the points one should recall about her type of writing. Her readers are countless and in her company or recitation, they feel sometimes spell-bound. The reason behind this situation is that she gets engrossed with her work in such a way that readers or audience transcend the physical moment and allow their fancies to soar aloft. She always does her best to make her audience live the ecstatic moment.

When we turn to her ideological commitments as a leftist writer, we notice that despite her upper middle class background, Lamie'ah managed to put herself in the position of the victims of society as can be felt through her heartrending presentation of the poor people living in abject poverty and continuous need. Her poem titled 'The Empty Corner' already mentioned is indicative of the poet's capacity to put herself in the position of the marginalized and victims of society. In other words, Lamie'ah always gives the impression that poetry for her is a kind of awakening people for some types of injustice inflicted on them or women as a gender. It is possible to say that her main interest in love and longing does not impede her from sympathizing with the suppressed classes and embittered people.

This point needs further elaboration as it represents the gist of the matter in her poetic enterprise. Modernism in poetry capitalizes on certain devices on which the founders of this movement did a lot of work to establish its guiding principles. Among these is the abundant use of symbols which play a basic role in modernistic literature, including Arabic modernism. Thomas Carlyle states that "In a Symbol, there is concealment and yet revelation: hence, therefore, by Silence and Speech acting together, comes a double significance" (Symons, 1899, p.4)

The other equally significant feature we come across in the modernist movement in poetry is the deliberate recurrent obfuscation or mystification which we find in the poetry of the modernists. Any passing look at the poems of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot or W B Yeats shows that these poets rely on the thematic and aesthetic aspects of symbols in their poetry. The perfection of lyric poetry lies "in a certain suppression or vagueness of mere subject so that the meaning reaches us through ways not directly traceable by the understanding." (Bucknell, 2001, 48)

Another feature of modernistic poetry which occupies a significant place in this trend is the concept of intertextuality, the act of borrowing from earlier texts to explicate or substantiate



the current texts. Even critics do not refrain from that in their daily practices, “intertextuality has served as a generational market for younger critics who end up doing very much what their elders do with influence”(Clayton, 1991, p.3)

Seen as a whole, Lamie'ah's poetry is almost devoid of these strategies and means of elevating and sublimating the poetic text in such a way as to be entirely different from traditional poems. Lamie'ah's practices in writing differ from both traditional poetry and modernist one in that there is a sort of hybridity and discrimination in adopting the new devices which she is cautious to make use of abundantly. Her poetry does not follow the devices popularized by modernist poets in Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. This is perhaps one reason why readers are enthusiastic about her poetry in addition to her personal impact on the audience as she infatuates her listeners with her dramatic gestures, wit and graceful responses. In contrast, major critics in her country give her work only a passing glance.

Below are some representative poems which the poet has written in different times and places which hopefully will concertize her type of poetry and its outstanding features. No doubt love and romantic imagination is the cornerstone of these poems. Only a single poem (poem No.4) chooses the question of keen alienation which will be the poet's lot till her demise in exile. Surely, the poem was written in Morocco but still silence and loneliness overshadow her inner life.

### 1. قصيدة ” العشاء الأول “ The First Supper

ا تَذَكُرُ ؟ إِذْ صَافَحْتَنِي التَّقِينَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهَاجِسٌ مِنَ الْهَوَى إِلَى الْهَوَى يَشُدُّنِي ؟ دُخْتُ ، شَعَرْتُ بِالذُّوَارِ حِينَمَا لَمَسْتَنِي وَلَمْ تَكُنْ تَعْرِفُنِي ، أَدْرِي إِذَا عَرَفْتَنِي تُحِبُّنِي ، فَكُنْتُ مِنْ مَآئِدَتِي أَحْرَصُ أَلَّا تُبْصِرَنِي وَأَحْتَمِي بِجَارَتِي ..وَحِينَ تُئِمُّ مَرُوحَتِي تَحْجُبُنِي ، ..وَأَسْتَرِقُ النَّظْرَ أَحْيَانًا فَلَا تَلْمَحْنِي : وَاَنْتَهَتْ الْحَفْلَةُ إِذْ سَأَلْتَ عَنِّي أَيْنَ هِيَ ؟ مَنْ بَعْدَ مَا افْتَقَدْتَنِي - تعرفني اسماً كنت لا تعرفني .. - ..وقد اوشكت على المغادره حين استوقفتني	Do you remember when we shook hands for the first time we met, and the misgiving of love binds me to love? I went dizzy, I felt vertiginous when you touched me. You did not know me, I know if you were acquainted with me, You would love me. From my table, I was anxious that you would not see me. I used to take shelter by my neighbor .. Once she gets tired, my fan screens me. Sometimes I steal a glance and you do not see me. The party is over and you asked: Where is she? After you missed me. You knew me as a name, you do not know me. I was about to leave when you stopped me.
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سألنتني ، سألتني ، سألتني ،  
 فلم أجب عن كل ما سألتني  
 ولم تزل كفك في كفي  
 تشدني إلى نهايتي  
 يدي على فمي  
 وقلبي في انعدام الزمن  
 خرساء كنت  
 وضحكت واثقاً  
 زعزعتني  
 Your laughter is like the sun that immerses me after rain.  
 I was surprised how I have not dissolved  
 by its warmth.(Imara, *If the Fortuneteller Told me*, 1980, 81-84)

## 2. لو أنباني العراف. If the Fortuneteller Told me

لو أنباني العراف  
 أنك ستكون يوماً حبيبي  
 لم أكتب غزلاً في رجل  
 خرساء أصلي  
 لنظل حبيبي  
 If the fortuneteller told me  
 that you would be my love,  
 I would not write love poetry about any man.  
 Dumb I keep on praying,  
 in order to keep you as my love.

لو أنباني العراف  
 أني سألامس وجه القمر العالي  
 لم أعب بحصى الغدران  
 ولم أنظم من خرز آمالي  
 If the fortuneteller told me  
 that I would have contact with the moon's lofty phase,  
 I would not play with the rivulet gravel,  
 I would not compose out of the beads of my hopes.

لو أنباني العراف  
 أن حبيبي  
 سيكون أميراً فوق حصان من ياقوت  
 شدتني الدنيا بجدانلها الشقر  
 لم أحلم أني ساموت  
 If the fortuneteller told me  
 that my love  
 would be riding a ruby horse.  
 Life tied me by its blonde braides.  
 I did not ever dream that I would die.

لو أنباني العراف  
 أن حبيبي في الليل الثلجي  
 سيأتي بيديه الشمس  
 If the fortuneteller told me  
 that my love would come to me amidst snowy night,  
 holding the sun between his hands

لم تجمد رنتاي  
 ولم تكبر في عيني هموم الأمس  
 لو أنباني العراف  
 إنني سألاقيك بهذا التيه  
 لم أبك لشيء في الدنيا  
 my lungs would not freeze.  
 Yesterday's anxieties would not grow bigger in my eyes.  
 If the fortuneteller told me  
 that I would meet you in this labyrinth,  
 I would not weep for anything in this world.

وجمعتُ دموعي I would collect my tears  
 كلُّ الدمعِ all my tears  
 ليوم قد تهجرني فيه For the day you might desert me.  
 ( Lamie'ah Abbas Imara, *If the Fortuneteller Told me*, 1980, 6-7)

### 3. To Mahmoud Darwish الى محمود درويش

ارح يا حبيبي نظارتك قليلا Leave aside, my love, your glasses a little bit  
 لأمعن فيك النظر so that I can look closely at you.  
 فما لون عينيكَ؟ What color is your eyes?  
 هل للغروب تميلان Do they look like the sunset?  
 أم لاخضرار الشجر؟ Or greenness of trees?  
 أحبهما. تتعري النجوم I like them. Stars get naked  
 بغير سحاب أريد القمر I want the moon without clouds  
 والله من أجل عينيكَ محمود I swear to Allah, Mahmoud, that for the sake of your eyes  
 أصبحتُ أعشقُ قصرَ البصر I have become infatuated with myopia.  
 www.aldeewan.net. Accessed 15/10/2022

### 4. I am alone on the shores of the Atlantic وحدي على شواطئ الأطلسي.

ليس سوى ذكرك كل مؤنسي Only a remembrance of you is all the pleasure I have .  
 من غرفتي ... عفواً فليست غرفتي بل From my room..sorry, it is not my room ,rather my imprisonment  
 محبسي

أرقب من شباكها الأحياء I watch through its window people crowded in the sunny beach  
 ملء الشاطئ المشمس. Filling the sunny beach  
 عيد لكل اثنين A feast for every couple  
 في مثل جموح الفرس Like the wildness of the mare  
 مجردين غير خيطين بقايا ملابس. Naked except two threads, remnants of cloth  
 من غرفتي احكي عن الحب انا From my room I talk about love  
 كفيلسوف يصفُ الخمر التي.. Like a philosopher that describes liquor which  
 لم يحتس he has not tasted.  
 ( Lamie'ah Abbas Imara, *If the Fortuneteller Told me*, 1980, 98-99)

### 5. Scheherazade شهرزاد

ستبقى ، ستبقى شفاهي ظمأ My lips will remain, remain thirsty  
 ويبقى بعيني هذا النداء This call will remain in my eye.  
 ولن يبرح الصدر هذا الحنين This longing will not desert the chest.  
 ولن يخرس الياس كل الرجاء. Despair will not silence all hope.  
 سيبقى لكفي هذا البرود My palm will keep this coolness.

ولن تعرف الدفء حتى تعود It will never get warm till  
 عناق الاكف اثار الدماء holding hands stirs the blood.  
 وعلمني كيف ينسى الوجود And instruct me how to forget existence.  
 ستبقى دمائي لظى و احتراق My bloods will be ever-burning and blazing.  
 وتبقى ظلوعي منى واشتياق My breast will be brimming with wishes and longing.  
 فكل حياتي هوى يانس Since my life is love enjoying of  
 لقاء قصير المدى فافتراق a brief meeting, followed by separation.  
 (lamie'ah Abbas Imara (1959) .*The Empty Corner*)

### 3.Conclusion

Hopefully, these few pages have given a sufficient idea about the Iraqi poet, Lamie'ah Abbas Imara who raised an endless controversy about herself along with her poetry. In fact, it is difficult in her case to sort out the text from its author as they are both bound by a symbiotic, inseparable relationship. This is because she has done her utmost best to establish and sustain this relationship between the two parties, text and writer.

The poet spent the first three decades of her maturity (1950-1978) in different jobs which were only partially associated with poetry and art. She worked as a member of the administrative board of Iraqi Writers Union (1963-1975). Also she was a member of the Syriac Academy in Baghdad. In 1973 she was chosen as Vice Permanent Representative of Iraq in UNESCO. She also worked as director of culture and arts in 1974. Out of this brief account of her public service, it transpires that she did not have sufficient experience in the field of education, criticism and theoretical background of literature.

The study shows that despite the huge number of colleagues and friends surrounding the poet, she maintained a reasonable distance between herself and others. Her cousin Abdel Razzaq Abdel Wahid (1930-2015) is a famous poet who encouraged her to pursue poetic works. Her friendship with poet Badr Shakir Al Sayyab left indelible scars on her due to his premature death and miserable lot. In 1978, she left her country for good and settled in San Diego, California, USA till her death in 2021. It is a life that is saturated with dynamic energy, pursuit of aesthetic pleasure and remembrance and support of the star-crossed people.

Finally, though she was attracted to the leftist ideology and the rights of women, she maintained her impartial view about life and what it can bestow. She was a woman who dedicated her entire life to poetry and the exceptional pleasures it offers to the creator and his recipients. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" as John Keats rightly confirms in his controversial poem, 'Endymion'. Throughout her career, she succeeded in disseminating beauty, grace and memorable moments of love and ecstasy.

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