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Adhans & Orgasms

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

ADHANS & ORGASMS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Emily Jalloul

2017

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences & Education

This thesis, written by Emily Jalloul, and entitled Adhans & Orgasms, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Denise Duhamel

Maneck Daruwala

Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 3, 2017

The thesis of Emily Jalloul is approved.

Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences & Education

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

ADHANS & ORGASMS

by

Emily Jalloul

Florida International University, 2017

Miami, Florida

Professor Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

ADHANS & ORGASMS is a collection that includes both free verse and prose poetry.

The poems shape the Florida landscape as well as cultural aspects of the speaker's home life, providing insight to the hyphenated space between Arab and American societies. The frequent use of the female perspective and humor inform the speaker of her own past, while portraying a woman at odds with a patriarchal society.

Many of the poems explore the self through pop-culture, sexuality, and heritage.

ADHANS & ORGASMS discusses the family unit's dysfunction as it tries to bridge cultures. Romantic relationships are examined, and many of the poems consider the male muse in an effort to reverse societal expectations with unexpected subversion by turning the lens to focus on the male body.

ADHANS & ORGASMS has a variety of influences, especially third-wave feminist voices such as Elizabeth Bishop, Dorianne Laux, and Sharon Olds. Cultural poems were influenced by Richard Blanco and Naomi Shihab Nye.

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I.

May 2015

I.

My mom says you can judge a man by his shoes.

When she met my dad,

he only wore Johnston & Murphy.

She says this impressively;

she means that he had style and enjoyed fashion;

she means that he stopped caring about this after marriage.

Recently, he bought a new pair

of Nike sneakers and she's suspicious

because why is he buying new shoes all of a sudden?

I tell her she's crazy. He bought new shoes

because he needed new shoes.

If he were suddenly trying to impress some other woman,

white Nike sneakers are not the way to do that.

He also needs a new belt, I say,

and she agrees.

Once she told me there was no way

my boyfriend picked out his shoes on his own.

He must be cheating on me
with the woman who chose those shoes.
But I was with him when he bought them, I told her.
She looked at me, long and hard—
“are you sure?”

II.

By the time I was sixteen, I owned only heels.
Once I went surfing with some friends in Jupiter.
I—a native Floridian—did not even own flip-flops,
so when I went to the bathroom
and changed into my wet-suit,
I came out wearing a pair of four-inch slip-ons.
Currently I own several flats and sneakers and flip-flops,
but I still wear heels.
I still crave the authority of extra inches.

III.

My lover once had a huge collection of sneakers,
and he buys basketball shoes I find tacky and ornate,
but he says are “stylish.”

He rolls his pants up to accentuate his boots,
and I tease him for it.

What does this say about me?

In My Heaven

Though I wouldn't feel hunger,

I'd sprinkle sea-salt on my toast

and drink mint tea on the days

when I wanted it to be cold.

I'd always resemble how I looked

in that photo at the fair in January

when I was twenty-four.

I'd sleep in elaborate tree houses

shared with cats of all sizes,

falling asleep to their purrs,

with no fears of an allergic reaction.

Poems would be etched onto clouds,

so that you could see the words

bounce off the sunlight.

There would be no music

except the cicadas and cardinals,

no perfumes, except from flowers

caressed by hummingbirds and bees,

no buildings, nothing to taunt

the mountains and trees.