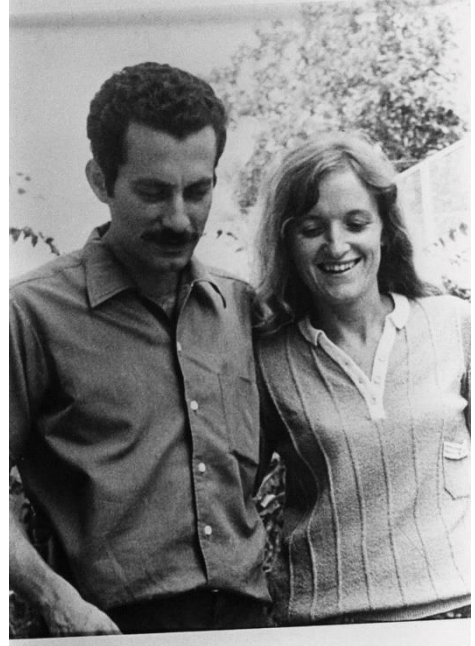


Ghassan Kanafani

April 8, 1936 – July 8, 1972

The killing of Palestinians go on in a world with selective vision without compassion. Kanafani was a leading intellectual of Palestine, writing an working always for freedom & justice in his homeland. He was assassinated in Beirut. I wrote this poem after meeting Annie, his widow. I shall always treasure the copy of his book she gave me that he wrote for his beloved niece, Lamis.



Sandals

*summer vibrates from the pavement
Beirut shimmers in the fierce sun
two friends meet happily
complain about the heat
look forward to school starting soon
one has sore feet heat swollen
her shoes are too tight
so they exchange shoes
laughing as they hop around and
support each other while
indulgent adults smile at their antics
one goes home nearby in the tight shoes
the other now comfortable in white sandals
sun twinkling on brass buckles
dances off to meet her favourite
uncle for a drive into the country.
later after the explosion
investigators find in the car rubble
legs severed at the knee
on the feet clean white sandals
buckles still gleaming in the light.*

Ghassian Kanafani and his niece, Lamis, were killed in a car bomb, July 8, 1972 in Beirut,

The poem is dedicated to my friend Sima who lives in Amman. She is the friend in the poem who lent Lamis her sandals.

This is the book, “The Little Lantern” ,that Kanafani wrote for Lamis on her 8th birthday. It is a story for children and adults; a metaphor for the world.

