

Talassus | Voyeur

Music Album & Translations from Arabic by Bahloul (Hussam Jefee-Bahloul)



Today, we're excited to share an interesting project that combines music with poetry: selections of lyrics from the debut album **Talassus | Voyeur** by poet and performer **Bahloul (Hussam Jefee-Bahloul)**, translated from the Arabic by the author. We are also including a recording of the Talassus (Master Voyeur) song to sample the flavors of the music. You can listen to Talassus | Voyeur (تَلَصُّصٌ) online on: [Spotify](#), [Youtube Music](#), [SoundCloud](#), or [Apple Music](#), and read the stories behind each song at www.thebahloul.com.

We'd love to hear what you think! Find us on twitter [@TranslateMonth](#), share using [#TranslationMonth](#), join our mailing list, submit a translation month event, or like our [Facebook](#) page. We hope you'll join us and celebrate your favorite translations throughout September.

—Claudia Serea and Loren Kleinman

تصص

Voyeur

بھلول

Felucca

(Fishermen's chant)

May our journey be smooth

May our journey be bountiful

Oh God, give us

sand bass, red porgy, and sardines.

(Verse 1)

Away from land

and its callousness

away from NASA's satellites

at dawn— a felucca in the sea
the sand bass is taking a break
fishnet lying on the floor
the moon is a light in a lantern

(Verse 2)

Away from power and thrones
away from war and suffering
enduring sea sickness
like a worm in an apple
while day follows night
like a key in a keyhole.

Stockholm Syndrome, Pt. 1

(Verse 1)

You kill me yet I love you

That's Stockholm Syndrome

how odd is the symptom;

the wink of your eyes

burns my throat

like a roll of hashish

conjuring the divine within

(Verse 2)

You kill me yet I love you

That's Stockholm Syndrome

how odd is the symptom;

the word of your lips

pours down like hail

I'm a cat that likes to play rough

so, bring me the rope of *Masad*

Master Voyeur

I'm wonderous by nature

my hobby is— espionage

an awkward teenager my

philosophy is pleasure

poisonous air fills the skies and the

buildings jumble

My beloved is behind a window and I am

a master voyeur

He promises and forget
fears

I'm eaten by

If only he delivers
to breathe

I'll forget how

Despite the fog
vision with this allergy

and my bad

I will tolerate you and
pollution

this

stuck in the web
screaming

kicking and

Penicillin

(Verse 1)

When I was a child, I went to the doctor

He said not to cry

and I prayed— “please don’t make it hurt!”

It’s only liquid in a syringe, and you’re ill

Hahaha —said the Darwish.

(Verse 2)

Afraid of passing comments

I took off my pants

as I'm really really shy, and my modesty
doesn't allow it

A gigantic syringe, it's unbelievable, "like
a drawn sword"—said the intoxicated.

(Verse 3)

I wait for minutes, and hear tidbits

about an injection, but no syringe appears

What a silly child, always petrified, making
a mighty fleet of ships—from paper.

(Verse 4)

I kicked and screamed

but they didn't care

I was crying “doctor, please don't torture
me”

I'm content being an unknown soldier, as
my bravery is not commendable.

(Verse 5)

Just like that, penicillin became tastier
than a loaf of bread
from age three, until... (well I'd rather not
say)

You are so lucky now to have a bolted
backdoor
and your name is "Bahloul"—which is like
no one else's.

Fasel I3lani (Intermission)

If we weren't voyeuristic by nature, we wouldn't have had this enormous number of curtains!

This album is a case of personal voyeurism. I peeped through the curtains onto the viscera of my hidden memories. Of experiences I had not accessed for a long time. A case of personal voyeurism furnished by years of personal

psychotherapy, life tests, experiments,
and above all— play.

The songs in this album were conceived
between October 2018 and March 2019.

And I'll be remiss if I don't acknowledge
this situation of “double *voyeurism*”; in
which I'm opening up my private world
for you all to peek into.

Freely, I invite you here to play the role of
the voyeur—and take a listen!

Your smile is a deadly virus

(Verse 1)

Your smile is a deadly virus
that makes my knees dance with shivers
contagiousness is a benign thing
via a kiss on the lips

But I make excuses,
it became a craft
as I'm scared of a rejection
that won't leave me intact

(Chorus)

I wait for the right moment

restless on the couch

inventing doctrines of endurance

like a Buddhist at a sacred step

(Verse 2)

I await you, so I can exit

the hole of schizophrenia

my peach would inevitably ripen

in a bamboo basket...

(mawwal)

Someone will fall in love with me

You, she, or even *Nawal*

or I'll go back to my tissue paper

giving her the love of my imagination

About the author/musician/translator



Bahloul is a musician, poet, performance artist, and a psychiatrist. He was born Hussam Jefee-Bahloul in Lattakia, Syria, in 1983, and currently lives in the United States. His debut album *Talassus / Voyeur* (db Realms Production) was released in June 2019. Under the name Hussam Jefee, he published his first poetry collection in Arabic in 2008, *The Opener of Canned Hope*. His second collection, *Birds Smoking Marijuana*, was published in 2017 by Al-Moutawasset publishing, Milano, Italy. His first collection of poetry in English, *The Chronicler of Indifference* is forthcoming from Červená Barva Press. His poems appear in American poetry magazines, including *Nixes Mate Review* and *Cathexis Northwest Press*. He is the founder of project [ta'sheeq](http://ta'sheeq.com) which merges elements of poetry, music, and visual art in multi-sensory performances. Read more about Bahloul and listen to his songs at www.thebahloul.com.