

1933 Nov 8 Katherine to Suleiman – asking for money, I cannot continue with this life any more.

Ramallah, Palestine

My dear cousin Suleiman, may God protect him.

After greetings and true love coming out of my heart I tell you what has compelled me to write these few lines is first to ask about you and your health, which to me is more important than the whole world. And me? I have good health and only miss seeing you.

When I arrived, I had left with me 50 [English] pounds. I bought house furniture and began my life in security and happiness. A month ago, all of a sudden, the situation began to change. I bought provisions for the house - wheat, and lentils and onions and coal, etc. - and we put it in the food storage bin [khazine]. Even the tithe [government tax on agricultural land], I paid from my money. Today he found out that I had no money left, so he closed the storage bin and refused to give us anything. Now I am compelled to buy bread by the loaf. I have borrowed money from your cousin Shukri and from Uncle Ibrahim Azuz. When they found out about the treatment, they went to him and made a scene. He in turn, fought with all of them and now all the neighbors know about this treatment. As of writing this letter, I have sent the boy to bring some coal so I can iron the clothes. He refused. I was very angry; I went and bought coal for half a piaster and ironed the clothes. If you do not believe me, write to any member of your family and inquire from them. My cousin Suleiman, I need money badly, for you know the children have their needs, especially in food. A month ago, Fuad's Godfather Bulos Rizq came and brought with him a sheep. I thought it's better not to slaughter it and to give it to the butcher so that we can consume it over time. My uncle [father in law] approved of this procedure and after we properly thanked the Godfather, he [Jiryes] took the sheep and gave it to the butcher. And from that day until today we have been consuming it. Last Sunday Shukri's son Jiryes went and brought half a kilo of meat. Your mother went to the butcher and said, 'if the sheep has been consumed, don't give them anything and do not credit it to his father's account because he's not going to pay you.' When I went to the market and the butcher told me about this incident, I was very upset. If you don't believe me, ask the butcher, Suleiman. I cannot continue with this life any more. The girl [Mary] asked her grandmother for some quince jam and she refused. She started crying and told me, 'my grandma refused to give me jam.' I cannot take this life at all. Either you send me money so I can live on my own or I will come to you. Cousin the water system has been closed with a lock.

My dear cousin, you sent me here for a change of air for my health, and presumably my health will become like iron. Now, with this treatment, my health has deteriorated and I have no money to see the doctor. I find it difficult to write you everything that is happening here. Greeting to your soul my dear and greetings from the children. Until now, I am still buying bread by the loaf and I am buying soap by the piaster and I buy water by the canister and I buy salt by the half piaster.

Yours, Katrina Farhat

Translated by Salim Tamari