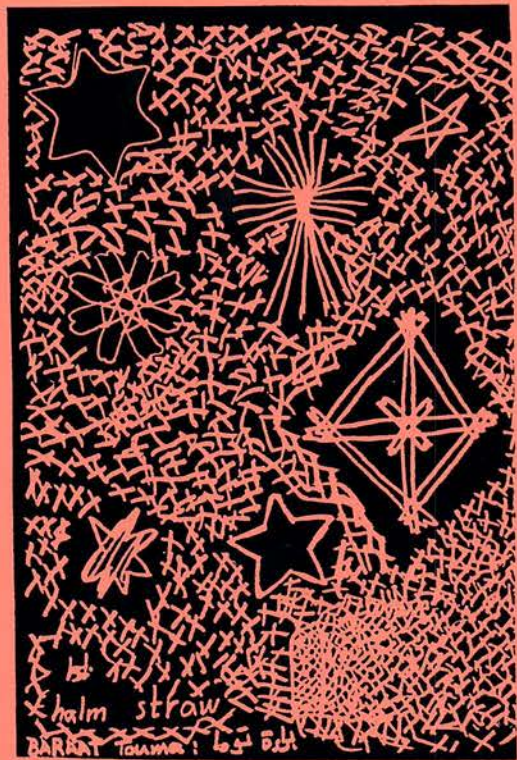
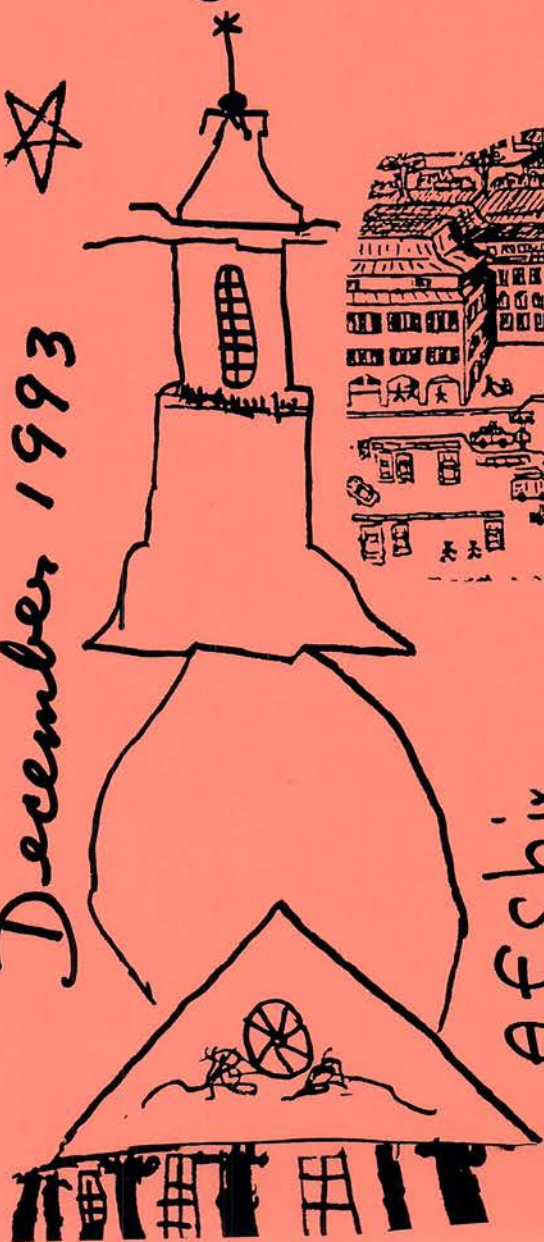


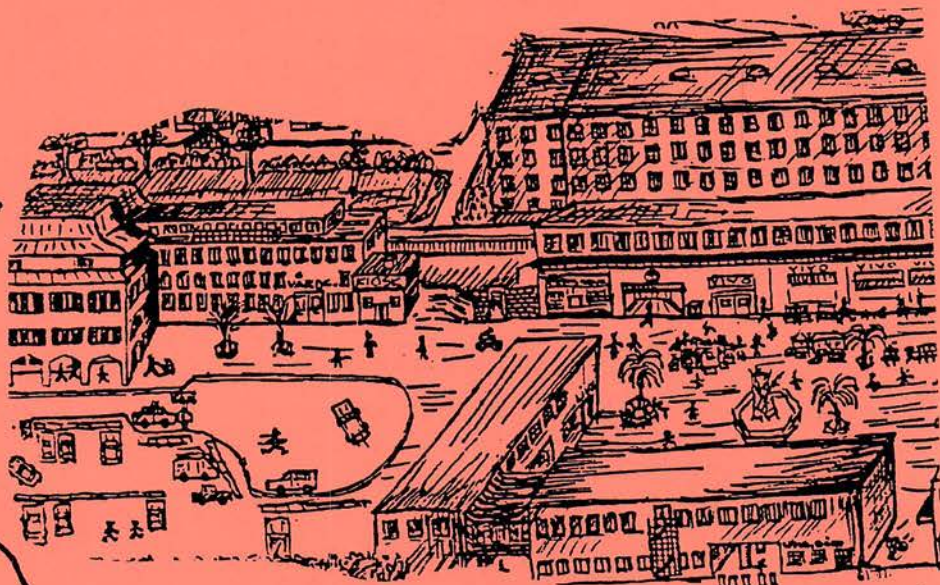
To
Toni
Morrison



Stockholm
December 1993

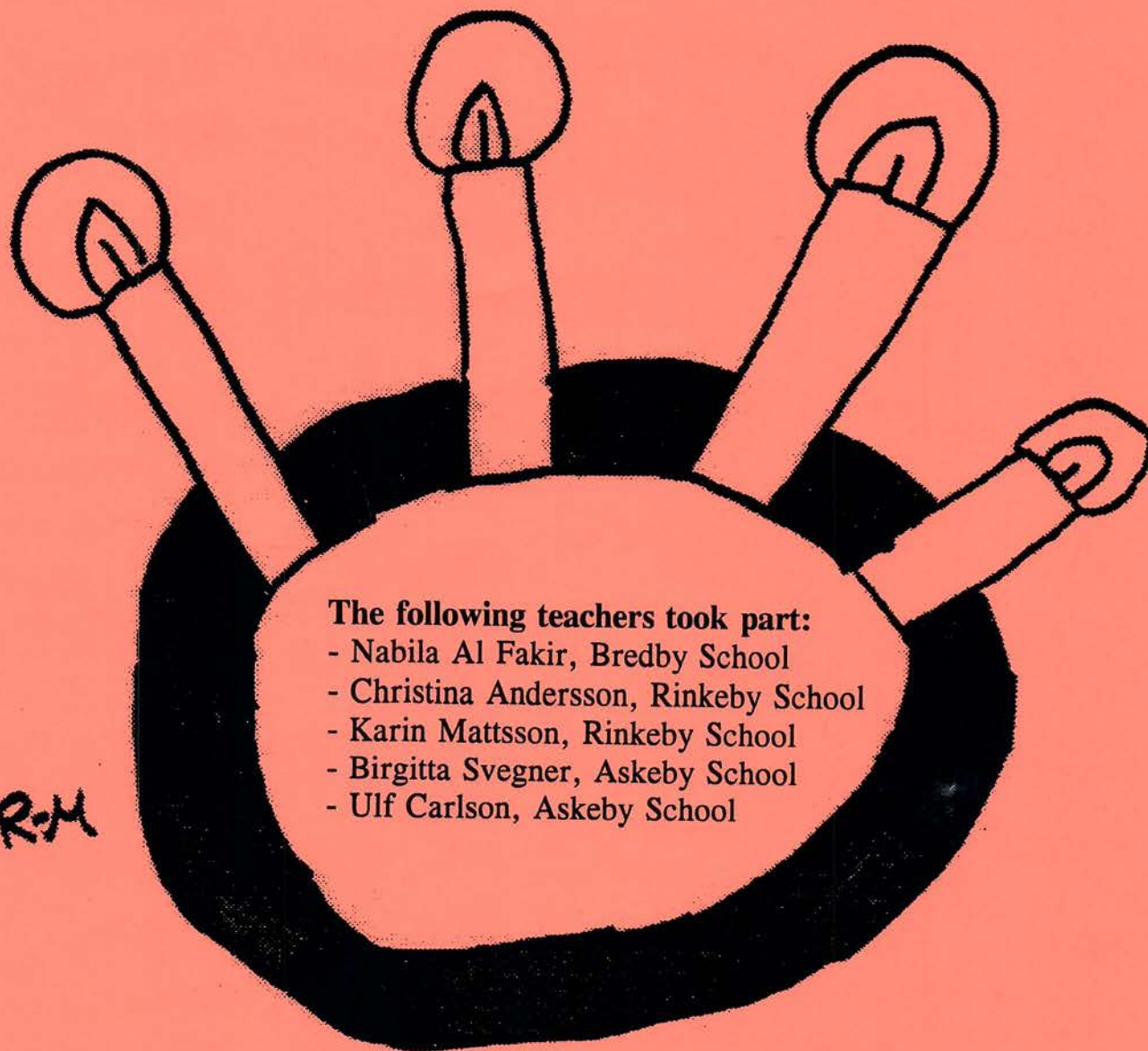


Afshir



Özgür Gezgin





The following teachers took part:

- Nabila Al Fakir, Bredby School
- Christina Andersson, Rinkeby School
- Karin Mattsson, Rinkeby School
- Birgitta Svegner, Askeby School
- Ulf Carlson, Askeby School

R-M

To You Toni Morrison -

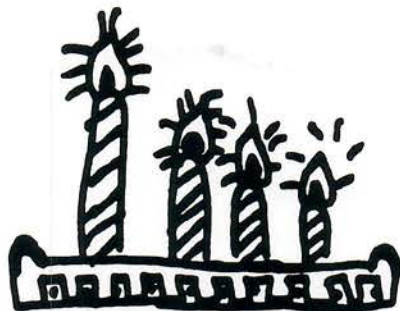
We have made this book for you - for you who have made so many books for us, to grow into, to live into, to read and love.

We want to show you something of our life, who we are, where we live. We, like you, grow up in a neighborhood rich in a mixture of peoples. This place, our home, is something new in Sweden - it is called Rinkeby and is twentyfour years old, with prefab high-rise buildings. This is a dynamic place, ever-changing, with people from the whole world coming and going, seeking refuge, work, peace.

Our "words to say it" are often in several languages. We have also drawn some "pictures to show it". Since you will be spending some time in Stockholm's Old Town, we want to show you something of what we see there too, when we take the subway from Rinkeby to visit it. The Christmas market will be there when you come, we want to tell you about that too.

We are proud to greet you. We see you as an example for us, in the way that you create from your mixture of cultures.

from children and youth in Rinkeby
and their teachers
through Elly Berg and Gunilla Lundgren
Word and Picture Workshop in Rinkeby
in cooperation with Mäster- Olofsgården, Old Town



W/L

Dear Toni Morrison,

We are two girls from Lebanon and Syria who live now in Rinkeby.
We welcome you to Sweden!

We are proud that you got the Nobel Prize because we have heard
that it is almost only men that get this prize.

We want to tell you about how we celebrate Lucia on the night
between the 12th and the 13th of December. We hope that you will see
many Lucias here. We think it's beautiful when it is dark, with all the
candles in Lucia's hair. Lucia really means "light".

In our school it is always the fifth grade that walks in the Lucia procession.
That's why it is extra exciting for us this year because we are both in the fifth grade.
Both of us have been Lucia here in Sweden before, but in our own countries we
don't celebrate Lucia.

In Sweden Lucia is an old custom, almost 300 years old. A long time ago they
thought that the Lucia night was the longest night of the year and that the devil
walked around that night. But now, Lucia is a tradition where a woman comes with
light in the dark night. There are many Lucia songs. The most common one comes from
Italy and is about a girl named Lucia who was killed for her religion's sake.
The melody is from a folk song from Naples.

There is an old Lucia custom: If a girl wanted to know who her husband would be,
she stood in front of a mirror with a candle in each hand and said:

Lucia sweet Lucia,
Will you tell me the answer?
Whose table shall I set?
Whose bed shall I make?
Who shall be my dear one?
Whose child shall I bear?
Whose arms shall I sleep in?

The mirror showed her the answer.

Rose-Marie Kassar and Lilian Görgis



Rinna



Rinna



THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Before it was common for people to have a Christmas tree in Sweden, a small wooden carved Christmas tree often decorated the table. This had wooden pegs to hold apples and other beautiful things.

About 100 years ago, people on the farms began to cut down a tree in their forest and bring them into their house.

This idea had spread from Germany.

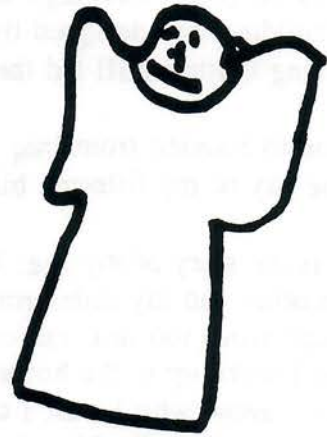
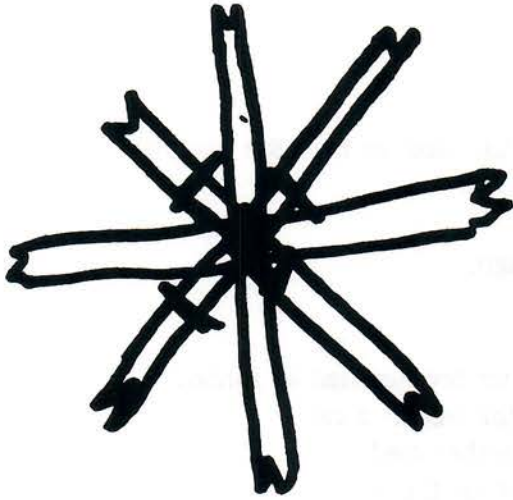
They took off the lowest branches and put them outside the door.

This gave a blessing to the farm and life on it.

Many towns in Sweden have a big Christmas tree in the main square.

Ayla Shabu

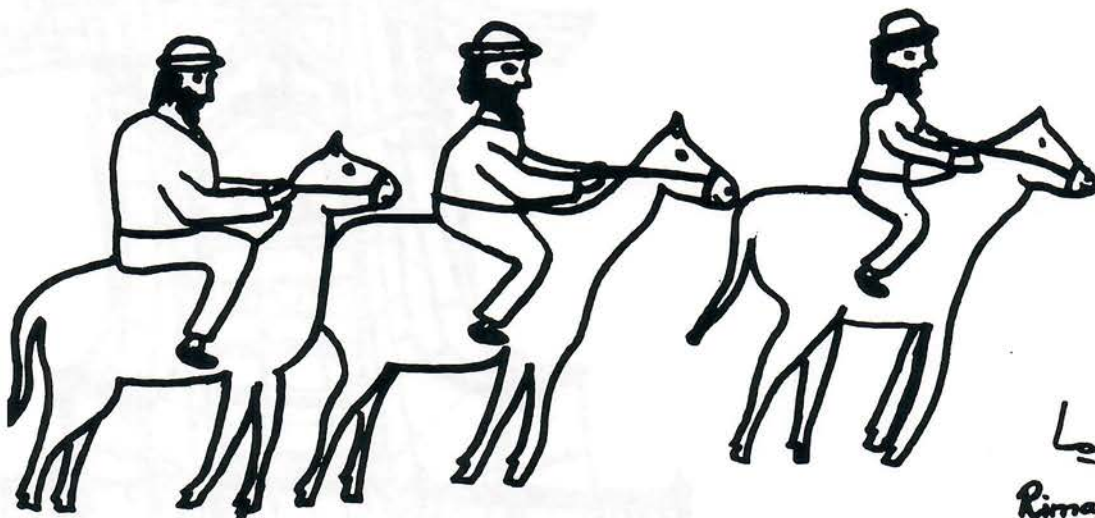




In the middle of Stockholm's Stortorget Square in the Old Town we see a big Christmas tree. You can buy wooden ornaments in a stand in the Old Town Christmas market - angels, stars, bucks, bells and gnomes.

In Rinkeby we have Christmas trees in our home nowadays, but in Lebanon we never had a Christmas tree. There we had a creche with the baby Jesus and Joseph and Mary. Around the creche were painted clay figures with sheep, shepherds, cows, donkeys and camels.

George Tasan and Tomas Milad



رانيا
Rania

This is the Stock Exchange tower.
The building was designed by the architect Erik Palmstedt in the 18th century.
The king Gustavus III led the opening ceremony.

I came to Sweden from Iraq less than two years ago,
on the day of my fifteenth birthday.

This is the story of my life: My father and my elder brother fled to Jordan.
My mother and my little brother and I fled from the war in a car.
The car drove too fast, ran off the road and my mother died.
When I woke up in the hospital I didn't remember anything.
I didn't know who I was, I couldn't see anything, I couldn't speak Arabic
and I couldn't walk. Now I am completely well, I live here in Sweden and I am happy again.
I go to high school and my grandmother has come to take care of my brother and me.

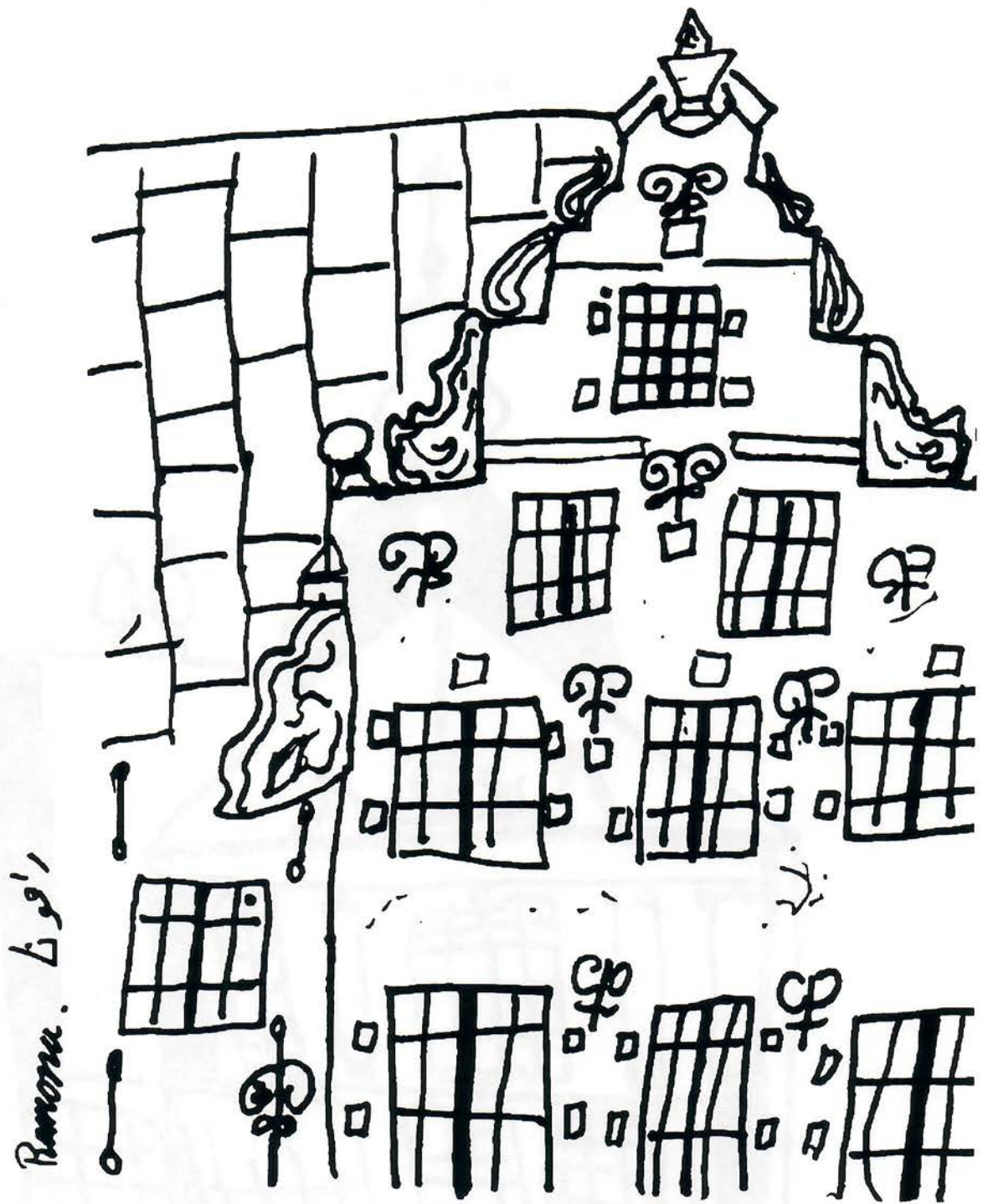
When I saw this tower on the Stock Exchange, I had only recently come to Sweden.
I knew only a little Swedish. I thought the tower was very pretty
but I couldn't express it in words then.

I felt sad because I thought about the towers in my country in Iraq.
There I lived in a big beautiful house, happily with my family.

Then the war came and destroyed everything.

Nagham Djaber





We think this house is the best of all of them here in the Stortorget Square. It was built in the seventeenth century. The houses here in the Old Town have lived through difficult times. Not so long ago people were poor here. There were many fires in cities, but the houses in the Old Town are made of brick and this has saved them from fires. Outside the bricks there is a kind of plaster. This house has red plaster and stone carvings around the door. There are also iron rods with decorations which hold the bricks together.



This is the Stock Exchange building.
The Swedish Academy which gives the Nobel Prize is on the second floor.
Before this was built there was a town hall here, a prison, a pub and
a balcony where they read the news every day.

Andrew Kabera



I drew the tower of the Stockholm Cathedral from the window at Mäster-Olofsgården.

They began building this church in the Middle Ages. This tower wasn't built until the eighteenth century though. There is a cross of gold on the top of the spire.

Maria Mourad

THE WELL

There is a well in the center of the square in the Old Town, a big well made of stone with water running out on four sides. On the top is a fine urn. But I am sorry to hear that someone has knocked the urn off and broken it.

In Turkey there are also many beautiful old squares, but we must always stay in school, we don't go out anywhere. We have an excursion only once a year. That's why I think it's fun to come to the Old Town with my Swedish school.

In my class we all come from different countries. My girlfriend and I come from Turkey, two others come from Iraq, some from Iran, from Uganda and from Eritrea. I was surprised and happy that Sweden's teachers are interested in us, in that we learn Swedish and that they give us good future. I miss Turkey and my friends since I don't know many Swedes but I hope to get friends here in the future.

I think often about that I am alive today. As the days of the year pass by we don't think how valuable they are.

All this is what I thought about as I stood in the Old Town and looked at this well.

I wonder what **you** think about, Toni Morrison. Do you think that your books have taught people something about the black culture? How does it feel to get the Nobel Prize and what are your dreams in life?

Buket Tosun

(my name means a bouquet of flowers)





Dear Toni Morison,

The first thing you will see in the Old Town is the Christmas market, when you arrive in December. You will notice the Christmas tree in the middle of the square. When I write this letter to you there is snow on the well. There are many people in the square and everyone is shopping for Christmas presents in the small stands. Somebody is making cotton candy, others are selling candy canes, ham and straw animals. I hope you like the Old Town because we do.





Josefin

حوزفين

SANTA CLAUS AND THE SWEDISH HOUSE GNOME

Nowadays in Sweden we have Santa Claus with a long white beard and a red suit with white trim, who brings us presents.

But there is an older tradition of a little man with a white beard, grey clothes and a grey or red cap.

This was the house gnome, who lived on each farm.

He was very busy, looking after the animals and seeing to it that all the doors and windows were closed in the house at night.

The cat was his favorite.

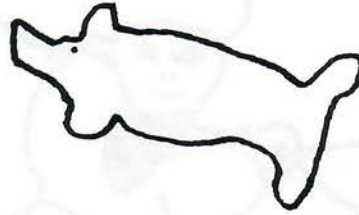
This little gnome was not jolly all the time, he sometimes became very angry.

Then he wouldn't help out at all.

At Christmastime everyone tried to make the gnome happy.

They put out a big bowl of porridge for him on Christmas Eve.

Chamiran Zeito and Josefin Sawma



The Christmas Pig

Ham is the traditional Christmas food in Sweden.

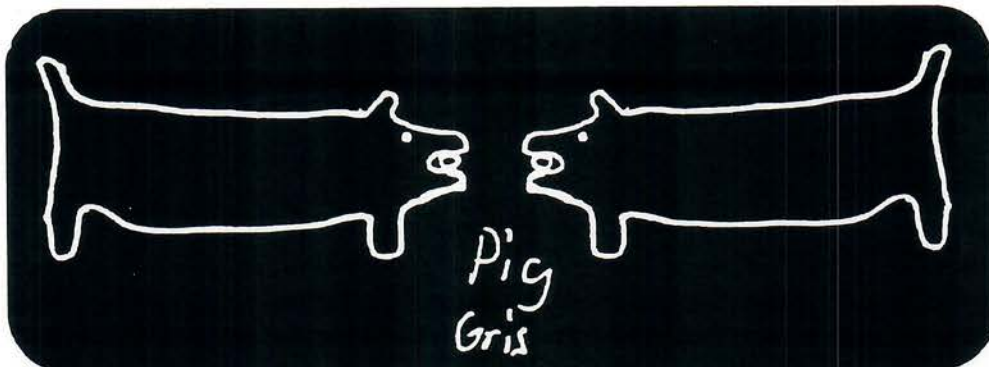
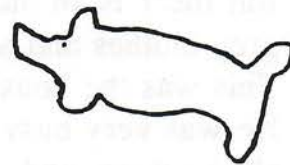
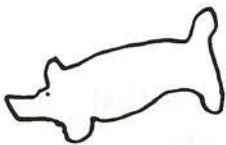
On the farm they killed the pig before Christmas Eve because there was much to do that day.

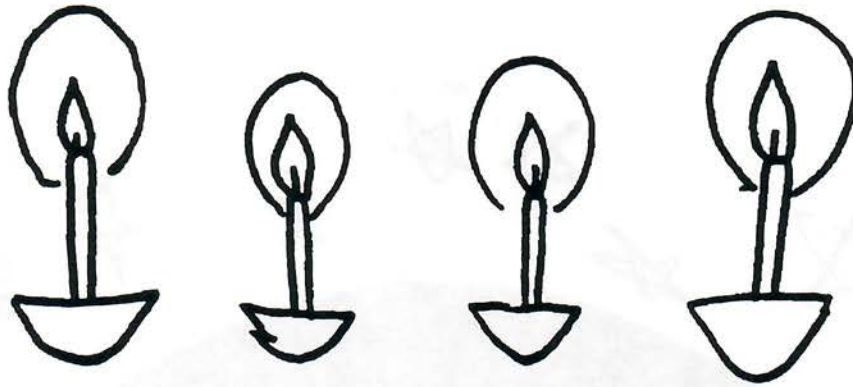
They used to say the pig should be killed at the time of the new moon.

All parts of the pig were used. Some of the meat was salted and saved. Some of the meat was eaten for Christmas.

Sometimes a little meat was put deep down in the ground, under a stone. There the house gnome could find it !

Ranna Sawma och Rima Tasan





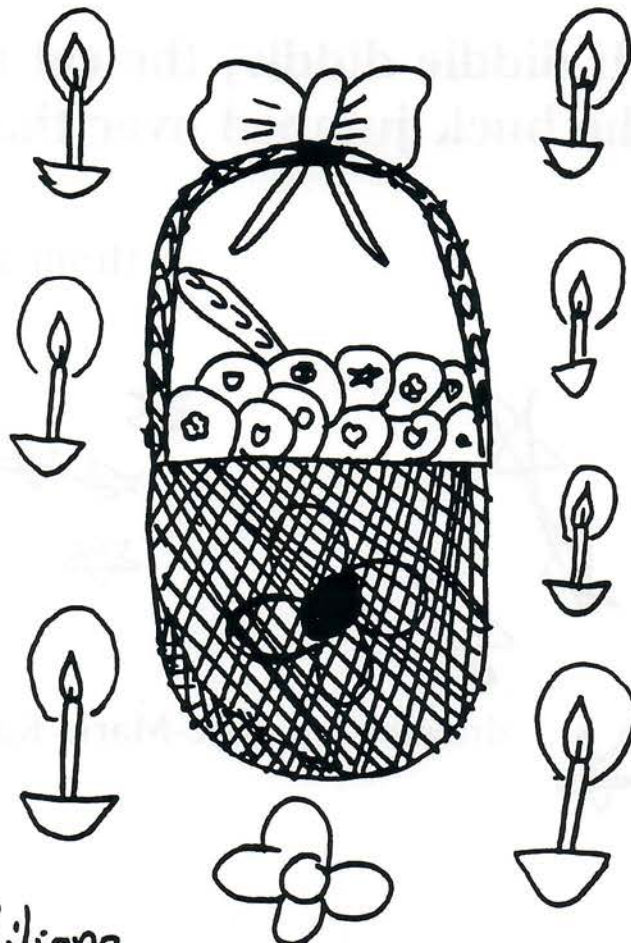
CHRISTMAS CANDLES

A long time ago candles were used only in holidays because they were so expensive or took so much time for the family to make.

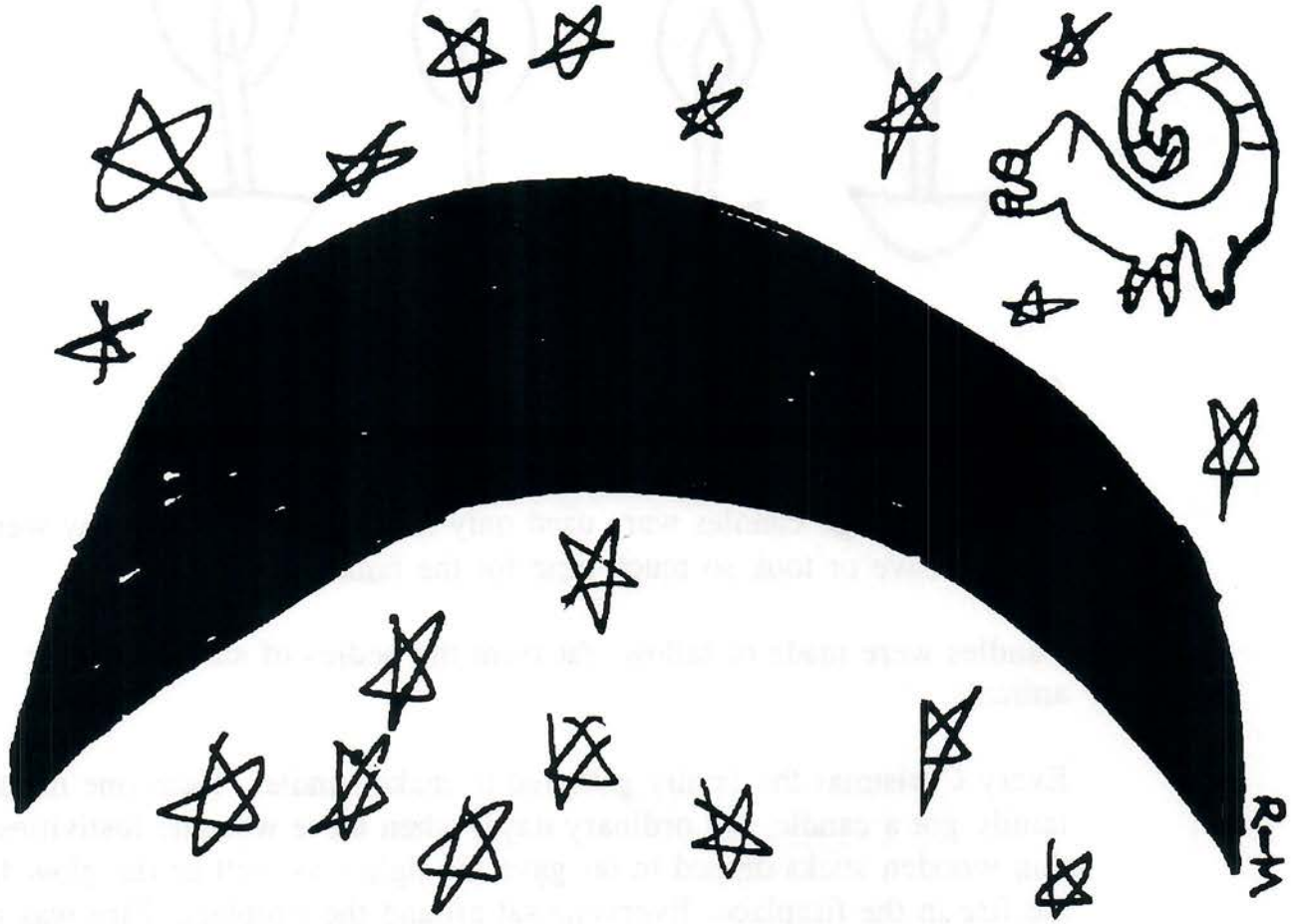
Candles were made of tallow, fat from the bodies of sheep or other animals.

Every Christmas the family gathered to make candles. Each one in the family got a candle. On ordinary days, when there were no festivities, thin wooden sticks dipped in tar gave the light - as well as the glow from the fire in the fireplace. Everyone sat around the fireplace. Fire was magic. You could see in the flames what would happen in the future.

Maria Mourad

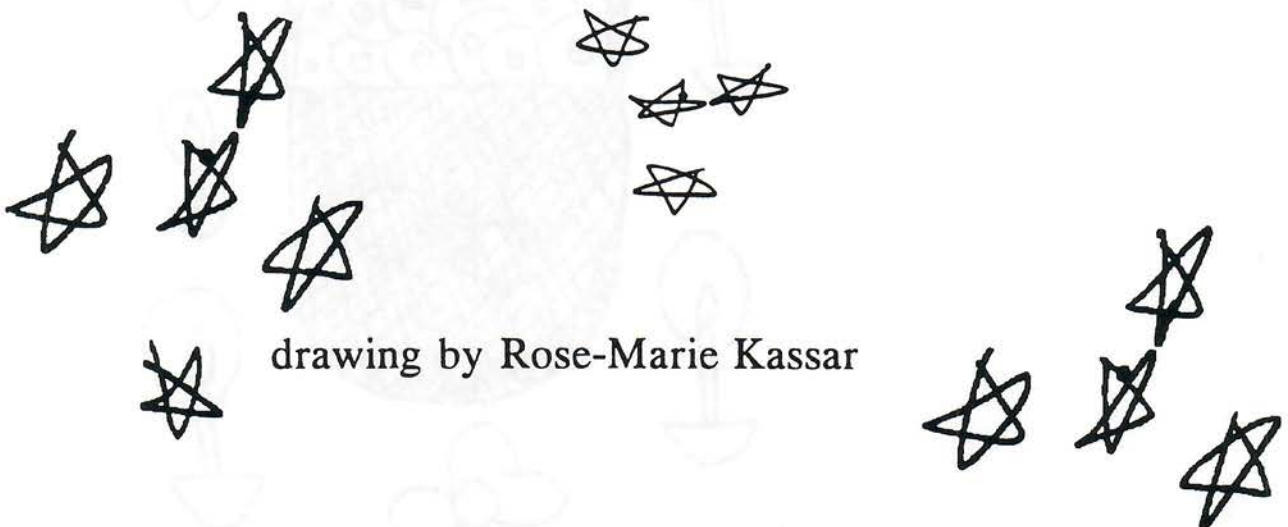


Liliana



**Hi diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
the buck jumped over the moon.**

(from a nursery rhyme)



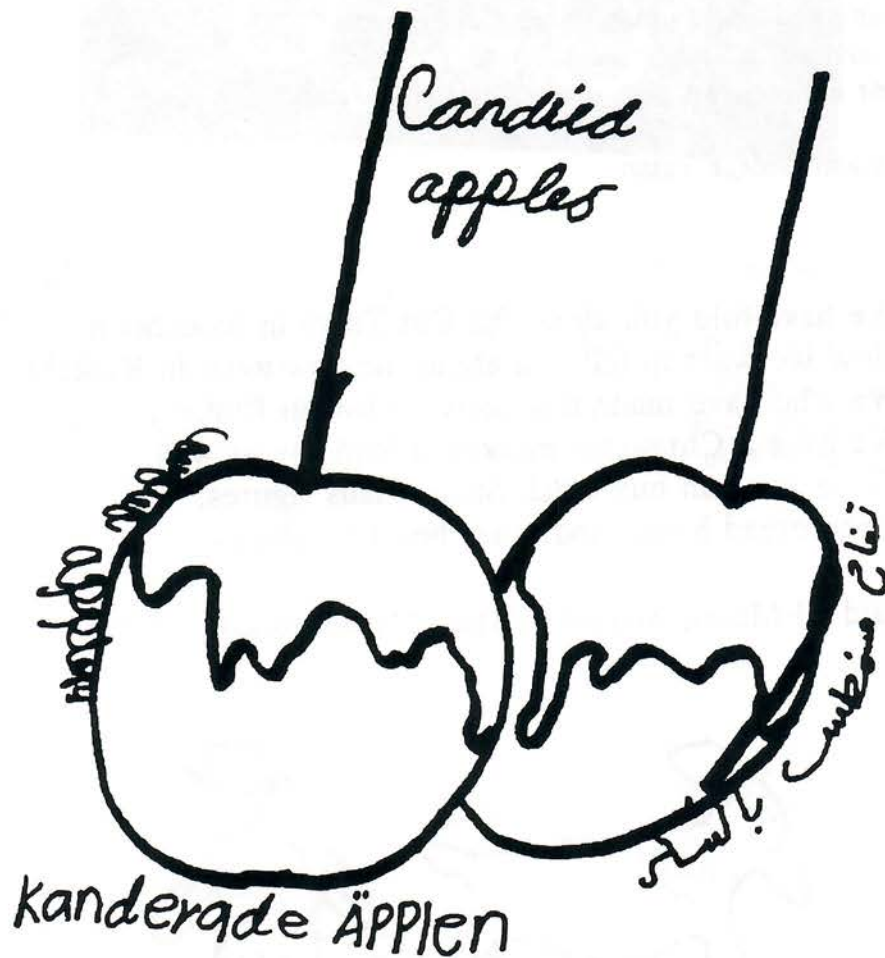
drawing by Rose-Marie Kassar

Kanderade Äpplen

CANDIED APPLES

I like candied apples. You dip the apples in melted sugar so they are coated on the outside. We did this in Lebanon too. There we used to have them on a big glass platter in the parlor. When guests came we used to offer them fruit, sweets and nuts. Here in Sweden I have seen that people hang apples on the Christmas tree.

Milad Görgis





The Christmas buck is often made of straw, tied together with red ribbon around the body and the horns. A long time ago St Nicholas used to walk around with a buck, which was thought to be "the evil one". This was really a person dressed up like a buck. Later the buck became nicer and he used to come with Christmas presents. He ran around the houses and played tricks though. And sometimes he frightened the children.

There are many real bucks in the villages in Lebanon. They run up and down in the mountains. They use their horns as weapons when they fight.

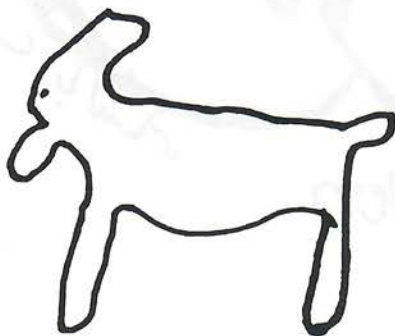
Milad Tomas and George Tasan

We have told you about the Old Town in Stockholm. Now we want to tell you about the new town in Rinkeby. We who have made this book all live in Rinkeby. We have a Christmas market in Rinkeby as well. There you can buy small Santa Claus figures, gingerbread hearts and other beautiful things.

Said El-Masri, Mikael Görgis, Milad Görgis



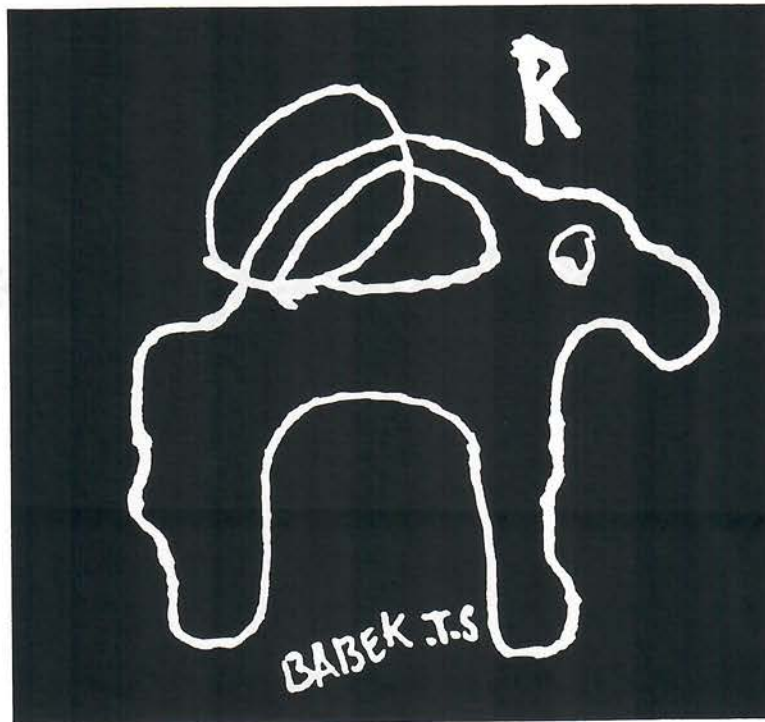
Ginger bread woman.



buck



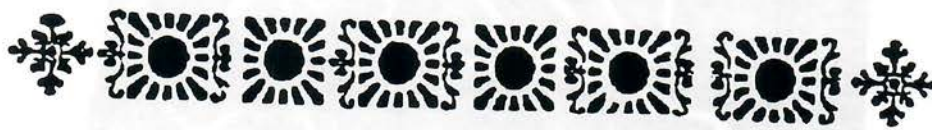
Gingerbread man.



There is in fact a buck here in Rinkeby too, but it can neither run nor butt. This buck looks as though he is made of gold, but instead he is made of shining stones, called mosaic. We find him in the Rinkeby subway station, where an artist has put him as decoration on the wall. The artist who decorated the station has placed him here because they found a little, little buck here in a pre-Christian grave about 25 years ago, when they dug to build Rinkeby. This buck is very little and was probably used in the old-time religion. Now it is in a museum.

Milad Tomas and George Tasan





Κοίτα,
Ζωή έξω απ' τ'ο παράθυρο
φωνές, αλλαδαχοί, χαρά.
Τ'ο Ρινκεπι σφίξει από Ζωή, παραμύδια, φαντασία.
Τόσες χλώσες τόσες παραδόσεις,
ιστορίες, έδιμα πού ένας νους δέν τ'α χωρά.
Τόσες προσωπικότητες, δύο βήματα απόσταση
νά, έτσι πού νά τούς αγκαλιάσεις
ἀπλώνοντας τ'α χέρια σου
Όλοι έδώ είναι συγγενείς σύντροφοι και φίλοι
δεμένοι ό ένας μέ τόν άλλο.
και κάτι ακόμη νά σε πω
για τήν Ζωή μας στό χωριό.
Ζέστα, αγάπη, ανθρωπιά
θά συναντήσετε κι έσεις
σαν ρθύρε έδώ μέ τ'ο καλό.



IN RINKEBY

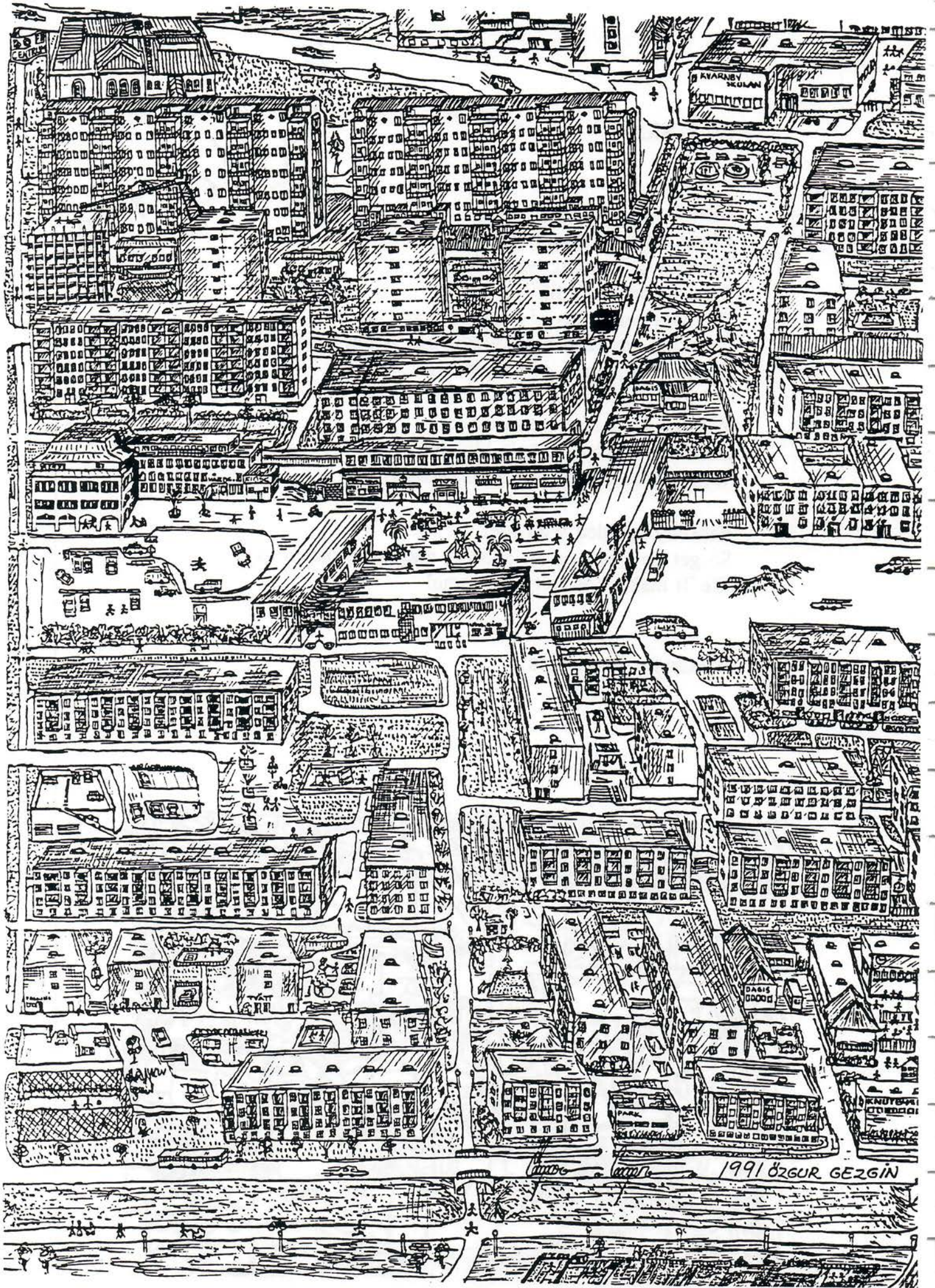
Here I sit looking out
I hear a shout, a call, a cry
Rinkeby is teeming with life,
Stories and jokes fill the air,
We have hundreds of languages and cultures,
So many we even forget which one is our own!
We meet all kinds of people here
All living so close
We can drop in on each other.
Each one is somebody's kin and friend
With warmth and friendship between us -

Rinkeby is filled with life!
So get on a bus or the subway and come out to us!
We'll make You very welcome!

Alexandra Pashalidou

Welcome



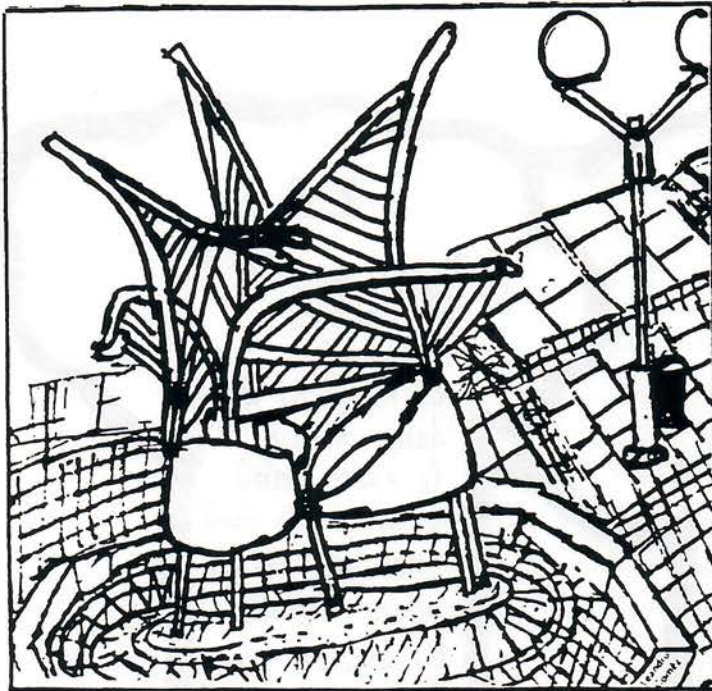


Özgür Gezin

THE FOUNTAIN

The flowers are blooming
The birds are singing
It is spring!
The fountain sparkles in the spring sunshine
Yet it is still cold
But I stay here by the fountain
like a dog who keeps watch over his master's grave
It is growing dark
I go home and leave the fountain alone.

Leandro Gómez



LA FUENTE

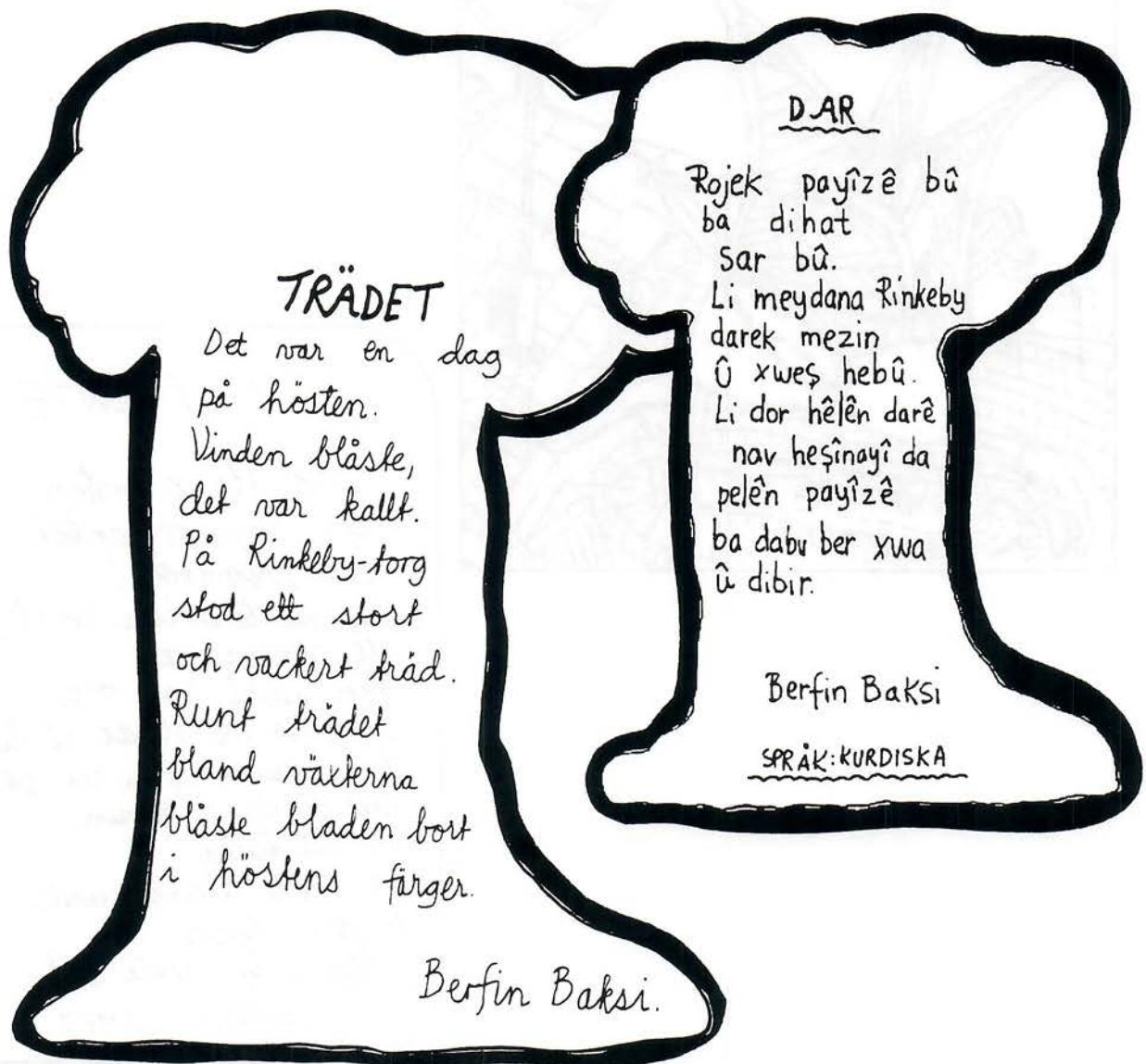
Las flores brotan,
los pajaros cantan.
Es primavera!
La fuente brilla en el sol
de primavera.
Pero igual hace frío,
pero yo me quedo al lado
de la fuente como un perro
que vigila la tumba
de su dueño.
Se esta atardeciendo.
Yo voy a casa.
y dejo a la fuente sola.

LEANDRO GÓMEZ

THE TREE

It was an autumn day
The wind was blowing
It was cold
A big beautiful tree
grew there in Rinkeby Square.
Around the tree
Among the plants beneath,
The leaves were blowing away,
Leaves in all the autumn colors.

Berfin Baksi



The square is deserted
in the winter
but I like it anyway.
I like to be with people
who come from different countries.
I feel welcome here.

Anne Pang

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Dear Toni Morrison,

My name is Maryan and I was born in Somalia. I am very proud of You and hope that You have a nice time in Sweden.

I myself like Sweden, but most of all I want to live in Somalia.

I was born in a little village called Kismaya, but I don't remember much about it. When I was six years old I moved to my grandmother in the capital city Mogadishu. I moved there because there wasn't any good school in my village. I wasn't sad because I wanted to live in a city and my grandmother was very nice to me. Every night she told me exciting stories until I fell asleep. My grandmother is not alive anymore, but I never forget her and her stories. And I'll never forget Mogadishu. I lived in a house in a square. Behind it we had a garden with hens and sheep, a vegetable garden and flowers. This was before the war. Then everything was fine in my country. It was always summer there, the sun shone until six o'clock every day.

I used to sit under the palms when it was too warm. The square outside my grandmother's house was very big. Women came in from the country to sell fruit and vegetables. They piled their fruit in pyramids on tablecloths with beautiful patterns which they spread out on the ground. There was a market every day except on Fridays because then the men went to the mosques. The men sold cows, goats and sheep. And the women sold chickens and hens which lay cackling on the ground with their legs tied together.

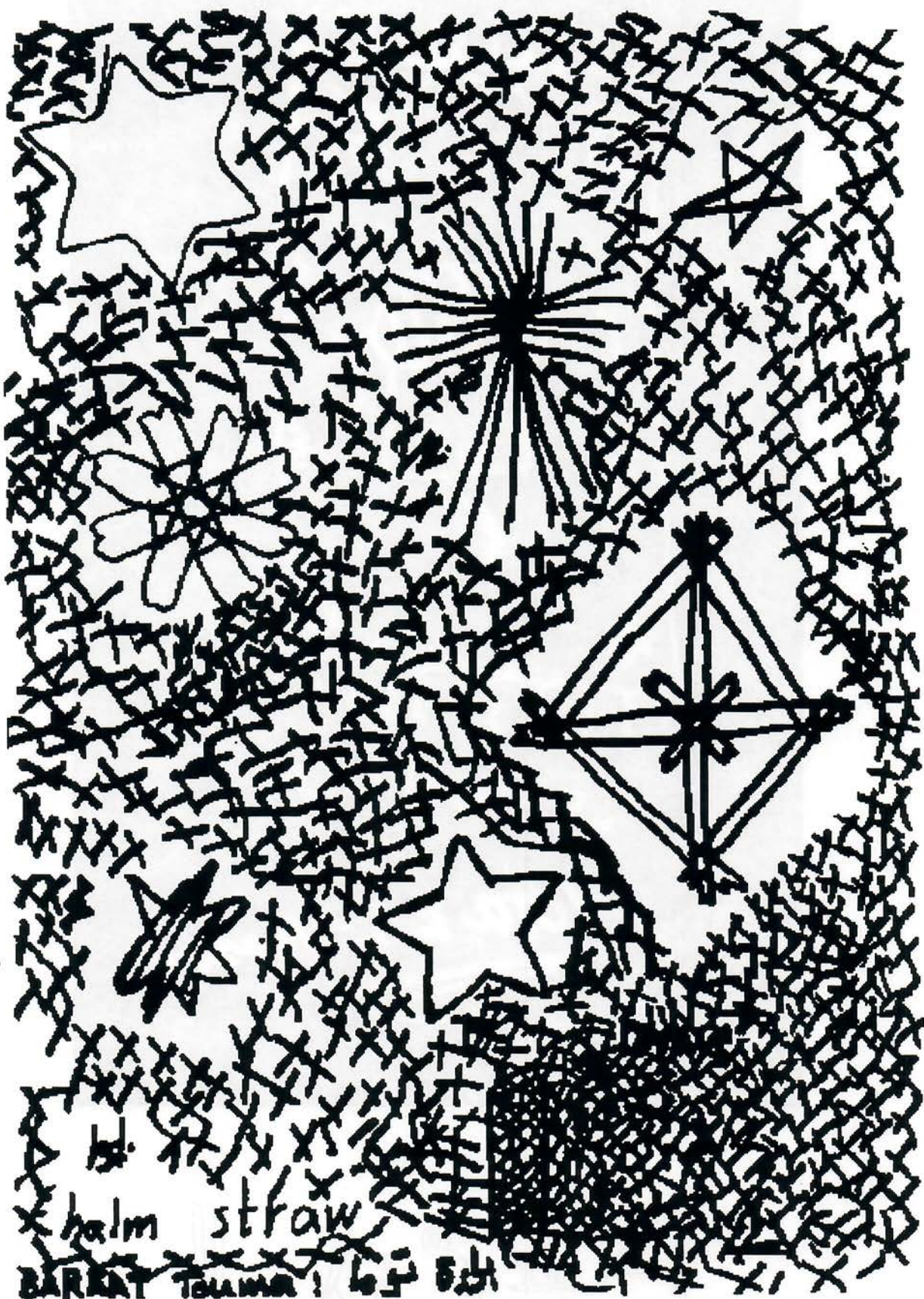
It was very lively in the square, everybody called "Come and buy from me, cheap and good"! But everybody bought from their friends, otherwise they would be disappointed. Sometimes men from the desert came. Their clothes were red with desert sand.

Five times a day we could hear the call to prayer from the minaret, the priest calling from the loudspeaker. Then all the men and women knelt down with their foreheads on the ground facing toward Mecca, it became quiet in the square. But the small children continued playing, the cows mooing and the hens cackling.

Maryan Ali

Waxaan ku rajeynayaa nolol fii can

I wish You a happy life!



halm straw

BARRAT TOWN: 65 50



السلام عليكم

*We are a brother and sister from Palestine.
In our country there are several great religions, both Islam,
Christianity and Judaism.*

*We two are Muslims, so we don't celebrate Christmas.
We don't have Lucia or a Christmas tree or a creche
- but we get Christmas presents.*

*We aren't sad about all this because we have other celebrations.
Our holidays follow the course of the moon, and therefore they move around.
Sometimes Id Al Fitr (the holiday after the month of fasting Ramadan) comes
during Christmas vacation.
In the year 2000 Id Al Fitr will be celebrated at the same time as Christmas.*

*We have read about Jesus and Maria in the Koran.
We call Mary, Marjam.
Our little sister is named Marjam after Jesus' mother
who was born in our country.*

Nora and Said El-Masri







حده صفاً وحب حصر مهجا،
 ووفات تاصح حبه حفا
 لثفا ه لثفب هه وها،
 و آب به فا حالثت خفا
 لثفا ل لا هفا هفا
 قنفا انا ذه وحت انا
 هه هه وثره صفا حبه وحت

صفا انا لثفب قن انا
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 حفا انا هه هه هه
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 وها لثفب هه هه هه هه
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SARA

Who am I?
What is my life going to be like?
I was born in a little village in southeast Turkey.
I looked after goats in the mountains.
My village is no more
The fields are not ploughed,
The roofs on the houses have caved in.

I am a young Syrian girl
My burden is heavy
My people place their ancient demands on me
The Swedes also have their theirs.
How shall I be able to carry all these?

My mother never went to school
She is a peasant woman.
I go to the university,
How shall we understand each other?

Deep in my heart there is always the love
for my people and my language
Deep in my heart
As fire burns
Though it is not seen
I feel the glow
All the way out to my fingertips.

I have no country
I have my language
My beloved Syriac language
The language Jesus spoke
How shall it be kept alive?

My proud Syrian people
Spread over the whole world
Where will our path lead us?

Sara Aktas



Baraat Touma : بلارة توما

The Rinkeby Word & Picture Workshop began in 1983, in honor of the 500th anniversary of the printing of the first book in Sweden. Rinkeby children and youth drew pictures of their own environment, wrote about their own life, made paper and printed their poems on a simple press.

The booklet **Rinkeby Writes, Draws and Prints** was followed by several other books in which the children wrote in their mother tongues as well as in Swedish.

After our latest book **In Rinkeby We Live with Our Hearts** (1991) we have continued our work on the themes of "Rinkeby History" and "Crossroads", a study of urban squares. The present booklet to Toni Morrison includes two of these squares - Rinkeby, "our home square" and Stortorget in the Old Town. Through our work with "Crossroads", we have an exchange with other pedagogues, children and youth throughout the world - in Turkey, South Africa, Cuba and Japan.

Iris Berggren
Cultural Secretary, Rinkeby District Board

Rinkeby Word & Picture Workshop
Rinkeby District Board, Cultural Section
Box 5028 - 163 05 Spånga, Sweden
Tel: 08-7619012 Fax: 08-7619010
Iris Berggren

Rinkeby

Ord och Bild

Verkstad

❁❁ Rinkeby Word & Picture Workshop ❁❁

The Rinkeby District Board

Stockholm Sweden

❁❁ 1993 ❁❁

