

Mariam had **disjointed dreams** that last night. She dreamed of pebbles, clear of foam, arranged vertically. Tall, young, again, all wearing smiles and simple chains and sweet garbles, one **flung** over his shoulder, come a last to take his daughter away for a ride to his shiny black black hair masses. Mullah Faisal ibn twisting his curly beard, walking with her **along the stream,** their twin shadow **gliding on the water,** and on the gray bank: scintillated with a blue-green color which had, in this dream, smelted like cloves. She dreamed of Nora by the doorway of the *halla*, her voice dim and distant, calling her to dinner, as Madam played in cool, sun-drenched grass where ants crawled and beetles scurried and grasshoppers **skipped amid** the different shades of green. The sound of a wheelbarrow laboring on a dusty path. Cuckoos clanging. Sheep baying on a hill.

On her way to Ghad Stadium, Mariam bounded to **the bed of** the creek as it shifted around pebbles and its white spray **pebbles.** The **beating** heart her billions. A young armed Tlib sat across from her looking at her.

Mariam wondered if he would be the one, this notable-looking young man with the deep **bright eyes** and slightly pointed nose, with the black-coiled index finger protruding the side of the neck.

"Are you hungry, mother?" he said.

Mariam shook her head.

"I have a biscuit. It's good. You can have it if you're **hungry** on your mind."

"No, Faisal, brother."

He nodded, looked at her benignly. "Are you afraid, mother?" A lump closed off her throat. In **a quivering voice,** Mariam told him the truth. "Yes, I'm very **afraid.**"