



Creative Work

Selim and the Dom Fruit

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This e-book is written in Mehri, an endangered Semitic language within the indigenous Modern South Arabian language family, spoken in southern Oman, eastern Yemen and parts of Saudi Arabia. This is the fifth e-book produced in Mehri, using an orthography designed by the authors for a language that is not formally recognised as a written language. The full e-book is designed to be heard and read, and the multimedia PowerPoint will soon be available at the [Mehri language archive](#) housed by ELAR. The motivation for producing these books was to encourage children and younger adults alike to read in Mehri, and to appreciate a natural environment that is becoming increasingly strange. Through urbanisation, a previously almost entirely nomadic people no longer engage with the natural environment in the way of their forefathers: older people tell stories about fetching water from huge distances by camel or on their backs, sourcing wood for fuel, foraging for fruit, encountering wild animals, and travelling at night by the stars. Knowledge of the natural world among younger speakers today is a pale reflection of that of the past.

Selim and the Dom Fruit is the first in a series of adventures that the little boy Selim undertakes. In each adventure, he seeks to learn something about the natural world. This adventure starts when he hears his grandparents discussing the *dom* fruit in their cave home. He has not tried *dom* fruit before and is not sure what it is, so he seeks it out.

He walks first to his favourite tree, the frankincense tree, *Boswellia sacra*, and asks her, ‘Are the things that glimmer on you *dom* fruit?’ She tells him, ‘No, those things that glimmer are just frankincense, and frankincense is not good to eat like *dom* fruit.’ He asks her, ‘Do you know where I can find *dom* fruit, as you have been in the wadi for a very long time?’ She tells him, ‘In front of you, you will find four plants, and one of them produces *dom* fruit.’

He walks and walks and walks. Then he comes to another tree. He asks, ‘What type of tree are you? Those things that are hanging from you, are they *dom* fruit?’ The tree says, ‘No, I am just *Acacia tortilis* and the things hanging from me are pods, and pods are eaten by goats. Keep going and you will find *dom* fruit among those [other trees].’

He walks and walks and walks. Then he reaches another plant. He asks, ‘What sort of

tree are you? And what are those stalks you have?’ The plant says, ‘I am just an *arf* plant, *Nannorrhops ritchieana*, and I used to have fruit called *miṣḥ*, but I don’t produce *dom* fruit.’ She then says, ‘Other people have finished up my fruit. Keep going and ask the tree in front of you whether it produces *dom* fruit.’

He walks and walks and walks. Then he says, ‘I am tired of walking. What sort of tree are you? Do you have any *dom* fruit?’ The tree says, ‘I am *Zizyphus leucodermis*, and I do produce *dom* fruit, but the goats have finished them up. Keep going and you will find *dom* fruit.’

He walks and walks and walks. Then he reaches another tree. He says, ‘I’m absolutely exhausted! What sort of tree are you? Do you produce *dom* fruit?’ The tree says, ‘You’ve arrived. I am *Zizyphus spina christi*. If you want dry *dom* fruit, collect them from beneath me, and if you want fresh *dom* fruit, eat them from my branches.’

Selim ate and ate and ate until he was full.

And then he walks back to the cave to his grandparents.

سيلم واجيريم

عبدالله مسلم المهري وجانت واتسون

سيلم هوما اعمها ذيغتريم بجيريم واد الطاميسن لا



جهيم تولى ارباته امغرات



ذيشخبرس امور هيس اد تاقان اليك اتصافن بيش جيريم؟
ردوت ليه امروت: ويلوب اليومه ذيصافم بي ار پيحز واييخز لهيه مطق لهيس اجيريم لا

امور: هيت بر هيش سات بومه وتغري حوودي كلس — حوه اجيريم؟
امروت: فنووك ربوت هرميت طاد منهيم يخروف جيريم



جهيم جهيم جهيم جهيم



ويصل سيلم هل هروم — ذيشخبره امور هيه: هيت هاه من هروم واد تاقان الييك ائندولون بوك

جيريم؟

ردّ ليه امور: هوه ار حروض واليومه ائندولون بي ار حبلت واحبلت تتوين تيس ار حارون جره

فنووك كسيونا اجيريم هل الييك



جهيم جهيم جهيم جهيم



ويصل سيلم هل هروم ، ذيشخبره امور هيه: هيت هاه من هروم وهاين من قون ذكمه ذبوك — شوك
بي جيريم؟
امور: هوه ار ارفيت وذومه ذبي مانين ويكون بي فونا مشح وامول جيريم لا



امروت ارفيت: حابو بر سهيلم لي امشحي كله جهوم توولي اهروم ذفنووك وشخبره من اجيريم



جهيم جهيم جهيم جهيم



امور سيلم: هوه قطك من امسير – هيت هاه من هروم – شوك جيريم ؟



امور هوه حيبظ: هوه فونا امول جيريم لهنا حارون بر اخوسيسن كل جهوم فنووك كسيونا ار جيريم



جهيم جهيم جهيم جهيم



ويصل هروم امور: لاد شي دريك لا — هيت هاه من هروم؟ ولا تخروف جيريم؟
امور هيه: وصلك — هوه اضود — تحوم جيريم قايا هيدل من نخايا وتحوم ثيري ته من اهذليلي



سيلم تووه تووه تووه
اتا پيا



ومغورن ردّ اضيحاء توولي اعمها

