

In The Atlas Mountains

By Phyllis Bluhm

There's a story here
between the flatness of the waters above
and the deserts below
The mountains rise like a volcanic eruption
lava tracing the history of a people

Wailings from the beginnings of times
hints from cave drawings
her ancestors conquered by so many
but they survived
she and her 7 children are the proof

Her language, only spoken, was disappeared
and she now speaks only Arabic

She is most likely an Islamic Berber
though she still buries her dead with ostrich eggs and lies them in a fetal position
she can't tell you why
only knows that all the echoes of her ancestors
have been buried this way from time immemorial
She may even be one of the few Jewish or Christian Berbers that have hung on
to finish their stories

She is unlike many of her people
who have descended to the desert,
others to the big cities and beaches
She still lives in her Berber Village in the mountains
now a destination for tourists
She makes her tea, sweeps her floors,
and probably gossips with her friends
and more than surviving

I would love to hear her story