

IMAN ISSA

Parable #5

WHEN AN ELDERLY religious leader—who would later become a key figure in his country’s independence movement—heard that the general of the foreign army, which had just entered his city, was going to give a speech addressing the local inhabitants, he immediately headed to the designated square. The elder stood at the front of the crowd, attentive to the general’s friendly words recited in the city’s local dialect. He appeared to be recording everything he heard in his notebook. His companions watched as his eyes widened and his face contorted while he listened carefully to the general’s words. They were certain the elder’s response would come as a rebuttal pinpointing the dishonesties spoken by the general, unveiling his words as the lies they were. To everyone’s surprise, the elder’s response, which was signed by him and distributed all over town the next day, was an exact replica of the general’s speech. The only differences were dark ink markings identifying, with no added corrections, the misused words, faulty conjugations, mispronunciations, and grammatical mistakes that filled the general’s speech. □

IMAN ISSA IS AN ARTIST BASED IN . . .