



Forget-me-not flowers - In Amberbeb/Eritrea

Dedicated to Hanna Solomon, beloved sister of Petros Solomon

Petros and I met in Milano, Italy and were casually talking about my kids' names, when I interrupted our conversation and asked him to take back to the liberated fields of our country (Eritrea) some seeds of "forget-me-not" flowers and plant them in Amberbeb, in remembrance of my husband Berhane who was tortured and murdered by the Ethiopian government occupying our country.

Petros took the small pockets from my hands and suddenly kept quite; it was a silence filled with pain and somehow an out-of-space experience. Petros Solomon, the man always in control of his feelings and never showing any public emotional display had his hands shaking and his eyes filled with tears. He said:"I will plant some for my sister Hanna as well. She was so young and was killed not long after joining the front". I put my hand on his and told him how sorry I was.

Petros – with a very reserved smile - said:"I like the name of these flowers, but I will call them Hanna's flowers". I told him that we would both call them "Hanna's flowers" while remembering Hanna and we would call the flowers "forget-me-not" while remembering Berhane.

I told Petros that the legend said that when God created all flowers and gave specific names and colors to each flower, He forgot this so beautifully imposing small flower and the flower whispered "forget me not". God decide to give it that name and color it with the little amount of blue paint left.



But the legend both Petros and I liked the most was that for Henry IV, the forget-me-not flower was the symbol of being far away from one's own country. Just like both of us and thousands of Eritreans during the liberation war. He said that he would send a photo of the first blossoms. I told him that my wish would be Independence for our beloved country before the seeds blossomed; he smiled and said he truly liked my wish.

Petros asked me to always think about the good times and believe that Eritreans like Berhane, his sister Hanna and many others who died for our freedom were now walking in a peaceful garden covered with little blue "forget-me-not" flowers. I do believe that and wish them peace.

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