

TONIGHT YOU WILL EAT AT MY HOUSE

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First I'll walk to market, freely, through the old streets
At noisy thronging stalls I'll jostle neighbours
Test tomatoes, quince and garlic
Cash in hand, I'll ponder the options
Taste the green oil and the seven spices

On the way back I'll stop for coffee
Thick and black with fragrant cardamom
Join the gaggle in the courtyard
Exchanging news and confidences
Then wrap their laughter up and take it home

Later, while I cook, the building settles
Gathers children, husbands, pauses
Our table is small, but tonight we will be many
The young ones seated on the floor, around them
All the faces of divided generations

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Heather Chadwick