

The Long Walk
by Shukri Abu Baker

November 24 marks my 14th anniversary in enforced disappearance.

I am, therefore, declaring November Injustice Awareness Month: IAM.

They told me I was going home.

I ran, called my wife, she dropped
a dish and cried. She said she would
buy herself a nice dress and me
a new pair of jeans, since I had
shrunk in size. She said, prepare
to be surprised. I said, I love
you too. Separation must end.

I put on my good sneakers, warmed up,
breathed in and out. I saw home, door
opened, kisses big and small perched
on my cheeks. Long trip, but love drives
with no regrets, no pauses. Sweat,
swollen legs. Pain pulled, I kept pushing.
Her dress, pretty. Life, roses. I walked.
Earth spun around the sun and I
around my stolen wings. Time moved;

I didn't. They said I was going
home on foot, but home kept waiting.

I bit my lip, bent the knee. Cried.

This stupid treadmill in this ugly gym.

No window dressing, prison isn't home.

Not surprised. Heartbroken.

11-18-2022