

To My Israeli and Palestinian Cousins

Love seems inadequate.
Even Love with a capital L
seems too small and frail to break
centuries of revenge.

Yet even more woefully flawed;
flak jackets, tanks, rifles, rocks
missiles after missiles
weeping after wailing.

Here at the junction of three continents
Eurasian Hoopoe birds, with their cinnamon
crowns, rest peacefully on ancient
Jerusalem stone, to return year after year.

Like the Bedouins and unlike conquering
civilizations that stayed for centuries,
their attempts to annihilate the cousins
as unsuccessful as turning lead to gold.

Now both peoples shout, Never Again!
Do they hear the cost of that mantra?
Never *peace* again?
Love is wholly and holy, inadequate.

But, my dear cousins
Love is all we have.

The End of Other

How about that war? we ask after
greeting each with a warm hug.
A dozen of us sit down to feast
on plates of farm fresh organic delicacies.
Wearing a kind smile and a brown
polka dot blouse, one guest laments
for their side. The Others.
I get up and leave the table.
I don't want to take sides, but I have.
I don't want there to be innocents
killed. But there are. Many.
Both sides are wrong.
Both sides are Other.
I cry on my way home.
Later I'm distracted by all the
love that surrounds me.
The way my husband, despite his pain,
sprawls on the couch and extols how
happy he is with our life together.
Heat from the wood stove surrounds us
like the synthetic fur blanket
my cat kneads with innocent abandon.
The bloated moon reaches through
the window and caresses our joy.
I think how unfair that there are
sides and Others.
Why can't we just knead out Otherness,
mold our hearts into a soft tenderness to
embrace the Other
who is, in fact, Us.

7,382 Miles Away

I can't hear the sirens' wails from here,
the shriek and thump of missiles.
Only whispers like hundreds of
paper lanterns from wind tousled leaves
that know only air and sun, rain and birds.

In the old cemetery, gusts rattle chimes
into song, as if to say someone is next.
We can't stop the global air masses
or someone's time of death.
Sh'ma, listen, the chimes intone,

there is an iron dome over your heart.
The one that shoots down fumbling
attempts at connection that you
confuse as an affront, a lobbed spear
from over there.

Those repeated stories and whistling
reverberations of childhood diss-onances,
must come down first before missile
defenses will ever be dismantled.
Before even Shalom. Salaam.

Above the headstones, below the
waning azure sky, a yellow stained-glass
star tied to a limb shimmies and shimmers
into a glinting sunburst, like dawn.
Like continuance. Like hope. Like promise.

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