

# Way Surrounds Us



Poems

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## Prologue—Breaking News



## *Breaking News*

In a country where I no longer live  
the Fourth of July arrived today amid  
parades and fireworks

even while  
citizens divided, not united, debate  
uncivilly about guns, birth control,  
rights and economics for the thrill  
of it all.

The feudal corporate rulers  
unduly control the terms and conditions  
of the discourse, determine by their rule  
who may speak and who will listen.  
Not you or me.

I turn to news updates  
here in my new home. Found-discord a  
modern composition in disphony—

“Clashes break out on the Temple Mount”  
shortly after 1 P.M.; at nearly 3 P.M.

“Hateful inscription against Arabs  
spray scrawled in Ashdod”

ten minutes  
later, “Vandals spray paint swastikas,  
‘Death to Jews’ in Rahat”

then “Funeral  
procession of Palestinian teen  
Muhammad Abu Khdeir begins”  
by four

“Code red siren blares in Eshkol;  
rocket fired at IDF forces hits open area”

Another term for counterpoint—“...disphony...[stands] for music in which the different parts have different pitches and are relatively independent rhythmically.” Malm, W. P. (1972) On the Meaning and Invention of the Term “Disphony.” *Ethnomusicology*. 16:2 (May). pp. 247–249.

“35 lightly wounded in east Jerusalem clashes”  
 by six “Gaza rocket strikes Kibbutz in south  
 damaging buildings”  
         at seven “13 police officers  
 wounded in East Jerusalem riots”  
   inevitably  
 around 8:30 “IAF launches attacks  
 on terror targets in Gaza”  
   and shortly after  
 “Civilians in south warned to stay  
 within 15 second of bomb shelters”  
   and  
 an hour later, “Gaza rocket lands in open area.”  
  
 And who may speak? Who will listen?  
  
 Not you or me. We already have our opinions.  
 certified, stamped, approved and strongly held.

## *Fires*

Tires burn as souls turn  
 from compassion to hurt,  
 then twist to anger,  
 as both sides shout  
 calls for vengeance.

Stones fly from slingshots,  
 hardened from hearts  
 torn apart by pain.  
 Murdered teens  
 on both sides,  
  
 the killers dark  
 purveyors of death  
 lighting dry tinder  
 drenched in gasoline—  
  
 like the body of the boy  
 burned while still alive,  
  
 like three shot and left  
 to rot under rocks  
 in a dry field.

The eight parents’  
 tears won’t teach the furrows  
 to grow food—  
   the only  
 fruit here a bitter violence  
 on all sides, police beatings,  
 riots, children hurt by objects  
 thrown through car windows  
 while riding toward summer  
 vacation.

Where do we go  
from here? What will we see  
that would help us to turn  
to the other in weeping?  
Why don't our tears  
quench these fires?

## *Crossing*

Crossing languages might be easier  
than crossing borders, even where  
people share the same tongue—  
those political lines we draw,  
the religious barriers we raise,  
the constructions of Otherness  
and Us-ness—

all the legacy  
of Babel, our raised pride—a tower  
built from ideologies and beliefs, cold  
stones shaped by history, geology—  
that would challenge the mystery  
of tree buds

which start to swell,  
once the days begin slowly,  
oh so slowly, to grow even  
in the midst of frigid winter.

## *Again*

The world has gone mad. Again.

And again voices incite—then hoarse leaders pretend to have been polite. They did not shout fear and hatred to explosive tension, to a thin-wire stretched, first sounding a note then cracking, snapping in two, each piece twisted. The world goes mad. Again. The leaders call for calm, like arsonists who work in the fire department. The fires burn in the streets at night. The checkpoints flow with blood and tears. And most of us just want to go to work, have coffee with friends, teach our children something other than this craziness in a world gone mad. Again. And most of us want to turn away and not see the burning, the smoke, the arsonists lining up toy soldiers at borders ready to pounce, to attack, to burn. Again.

War Surrounds Us

