

A Poem for Gaza

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

I never knew death until I saw the bombing of a refugee camp
Craters filled with disfigured ankles and splattered torsos
But no sign of a face, the only impression a fading scream
I never understood pain
Until a seven-year-old girl clutched my hand
Stared up at me with soft brown eyes, waiting for answers
But I didn't have any
I had muted breath and dry pens in my back pocket
That couldn't fill pages of understanding or resolution

In her other hand she held the key to her grandmother's house
But I couldn't unlock the cell that caged her older brothers
They said, we slingshot dreams so the other side will feel our
father's presence
A craftsman
Built homes in areas where no one was building
And when he fell, he was silent
A .50 caliber bullet tore through his neck shredding his vocal
cords
Too close to the wall
His hammer must have been a weapon
He must have been a weapon
Encroaching on settlement hills and demographics

So his daughter studies mathematics
Seven explosions times eight bodies
Equals four Congressional resolutions
Seven Apache helicopters times eight Palestinian villages
Equals silence and a second Nakba
Our birthrate minus their birthrate
Equals one sea and 400 villages re-erected
One state plus two peoples...and she can't stop crying
Never knew revolution or the proper equation
Tears at the paper with her fingertips
Searching for answers
But only has teachers
Looks up to the sky and see stars of David demolishing squalor
with hellfire missiles

She thinks back words and memories of his last hug before he
turned and fell
Now she pumps dirty water from wells, while settlements divide
and conquer
And her father's killer sits beachfront with European vernacular
She thinks back words, while they think backwards
Of obscene notions and indigenous confusion

This our land!, she said

She's seven years old
This our land!, she said
And she doesn't need a history book or a schoolroom teacher
She has these walls, this sky, her refugee camp
She doesn't know the proper equation
But she sees my dry pens
No longer waiting for my answers
Just holding her grandmother's key...searching for ink

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