

KADDISH FOR GAZA

by Michael Lesher

*There is a relationship between war and words; there is a
relationship between love and war.*

CONTENTS

THINKING OF GAZA FROM THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY

/ 1

BURLESQUE AT THE BARRIER / 3

Emendations / 5

Explanatory Notes / 7

Textual Notes / 9

THINKING OF GAZA FROM THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY

If I were to be born again,
it might be as the white moth
whose slow, flexing heartbeat
of wings
5 declares its pittance
in a vast anonymity of snow ...

It might be as the spore
borne on mimosa tendrils
in an uncertain breeze,
10 alone in a tiny pivot of air,
all the earth a mystery hovering below.

For I am my place, and
I have nowhere to go,

15 and all hearts are my heart,
and none knows me,
every breath shakes my world
though not a syllable is mine —

not a glance my glance, yet in every one
I disappear behind its silence ...
20 And where a petal drops onto the fixed eyes
of the child whose bracts are
already in earth,
whose face
is cold with death, her eyes
25 blue and blank
as the flower that was —

where,
at dawn, a boy rises from another tear
to test the blue air
30 left behind by the bomb,

and cannot find any path
to a door, or womb, or nightmare
clearer than smoke
or louder than a shroud,

35 and not even the first word
of mourning can be said —

I also rise;

That is me.

40 Because I am not dead.
Because I am not there.

Because I cannot breathe
the air motionless forever
in the child's breast,

45 and cannot touch the sky
that is all that's left
to the last boy's famished eyes.

Because I wander that sky unseen,
never to touch their earth.

50 And because,
whatever I touch,
it is their faces I will feel,
their silence my breath will trace.

BURLESQUE AT THE BARRIER

What do you write on a wall?
What can you smear that will fall
upwards of your fist, and sting
sharper than a tear?

EMENDATIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTES

TEXTUAL NOTES

KADDISH FOR GAZA by Michael Leshner
1 **THINKING OF GAZA FROM THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY**
3 **BURLESQUE AT THE BARRIER**