

# KADDISH FOR GAZA

by Michael Lesher

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



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## 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**  
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