



Source: Abraham Rabinovich, 'Israel, US plot the downfall of Hamas', *The Australian online*, 15/02/06.
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I wonder if it's possible to experience anything like a renaissance this early in my life. I mean, come on, I just turned twenty-three; isn't a renaissance sort of reserved for some stifled, panicky middle-ager who stands against time and decline by buying a new sports car? Or swapping that tired old spouse for a newer model? Or at least getting an inappropriately trendy haircut? That's what I tend to think, anyway, and yet there's no denying that something seismic is happening here, to me, even in my callow youth.

I think maybe what it is I'm talking about is this sense I have of having come to a decision about things, and by things I mean my life, and by that I mean my sense of control over the course of events I've taken on or am taken on. I guess what I've decided, if I've even decided anything, is that I might be sort of tired of leaving things up to other people: tired of living in fear of their rejection or abandonment, of the anger I imagine for offenses I haven't even committed yet. Tired of thinking about how other people might judge the choices I make about the

way I live my life, tired of collecting retorts like coiled, angry snakes, protection in the event of an insult that never really occurs. Tired of rehearsing contrition I never really need—or, if I do, that I don't really owe to anyone anyway—or gratitude for kindnesses I just might actually deserve.

All of which, I realize, has much less to do with letting other people run the show and much more to do with not giving up everything I have, letting myself be the ultimate arbiter of my own life instead of handing the responsibility off to folks who probably don't even want it in the first place. And maybe arriving at that point is less of a renaissance, a rebirth, than it is merely an arrival, a very normal place to come to on the cusp of some kind of adulthood. Maybe it's less, that I've been moving for so long in the wrong direction and want to switch gears and more a sign that I'm doing exactly the right things in my own sweet time. Whatever it is, happy birthday to me.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Jacqui Shine.