



Source: Sue Fleming, 'Lay groundwork for use of force in Iran, says US', Reuters, *The Guardian*, AFP in Sydney *Morning Herald* online, 15/04/06.

Tags: [bombings](#), [desert](#), [death](#), [travel](#), [storytelling](#)
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Lying on this table I don't know where I am. I only know where I've been.

'Could you possibly direct me to the Qantas check-in?'

—'Where is it you want to go then?'

'I have my ticket. Is this too heavy, my bag? Could you pop it on the scales for me?'

'It's the handle. I labour with the handle, trying to drag the new Samsung suitcase across from the trolley. The wheels catch in the trolley's restraining hoops, and the handle suddenly pops out and extends, sending me staggering backwards.'

—'Where are you going with this?'

'I can't see. The sun bores down. The red of the sand rushes up to meet it. The land arches with the heat. It is a migraine of dust and light. I am walking across a vast open square facing the Western Wall. Just a retaining wall, holding up the Esplanade and the mosques.'

—'What's holding you up?'

'I'm on the city walls, looking down towards the Dead Sea. I walk down. All around me, the shocked stares of Jewish pilgrims, the men in long black coats and hats, the women wigged and shawled. One look as I pass, and the men in black scatter from my path, like skittles in the wind, as if I were nitro glycerine.'

—'Are you going to explode?'

'Yes, this world needs a shake up.

Past the red post box on the left.

Past the Boots shop.

It's time.

Thank you, mother, father.

Goodbye Tubby.

Turn the corner.

Catch sight of Holborn tube station.

All praise Allah.

Go.'

—'Be angry, and die of this anger?'

'All the forces are working with us, coming together and heading towards this moment. It's like chaos theory.

Things may seem messy, random, incoherent and there is this magical moment, when the pattern becomes clear, all of the particles adhere in one magnificent, pure form.

'You were there too.'

—'Where, where were we?'

'Stones. Smooth river stones skimming across the surface, skipping, thrown just right. I'm barefoot, crossing the river, it's filthy, storm water drains deposit everyone's

detritus, right here, in my backyard. They're running, at me, at you, yelling, "get out, just get out, get out of the way, you're in the way, go away, just fuck off. Go on, get out, just get out, get out of the way."'

—'What the fuck is going on? Where are you? What's happening? Are you attacking or defending? I don't understand. I'm here, with you, I'm listening, I can't make head nor tail of it.'

'I can't stop. I have to keep going. I want to keep going. I need to do this. It wakes me up in the morning and puts me to bed at night. But I'm tempting the gods with my definite plan. The wrath of the gods could come again.'

—'Tell me more. What is it you fear from them?'

'I fear the ending.'

—'What's ending?'

'Well...you know. These nights will end. I will get to night 1001, and then what? What will I have then to hold me up?'

—'There is this quiet around you now, like a bubble. It's like the whole world has suddenly calmed down and closed down to be with you at the end and I don't want to break it by calling out. There is so much quiet so I sit down on the step and I take you in my arms. Yes. I have to breathe quite a bit to stop myself from trembling or crying out and I am very frightened. What are you doing here in my lap with your body all cut up and open? So I rock you and I try to calm you and I try to tell you that it is all okay and that we love you, all of us, and that we will look after you and that I'm sorry, so sorry.'

'I shouldn't have to see you like this. I shouldn't have had to see him like that. Not a photo. A body fragment. Who took this photo? Who saw him like this? I badly wanted to cover this arm, to cover him up, his baby skin, put him in a blanket. Take him home. Hold him. Make him better. But it wasn't he who could be healed.'

She has lent her body to nigh-on 300 stories, giving them her own breath. She draws breath now, and feels the breathing of other bodies through her own lungs. She has incorporated the flesh and blood of other lives. Her limbs are heavy with their weight. Hearts and bones and lives are knit together in her. She has taken in these foreign bodies in order to go on living; given them life, casting them out into the ether. They have grown in magnitude, feeding from her body and they have come to outnumber her.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell, Anna Gibbs, Victoria Spence and Ingrid Wassenaar from stories by Barbara Campbell, Caroline Lee, Joseph Rabie, Victoria Spence and Ingrid Wassenaar.