

Story for performance #384
webcast from Madrid at 09:47PM, 09 Jul 06



Source: Greg Myre, 'Rockets create a 'balance of fear' with Israel, Gaza residents say', *New York Times online*, 09/07/06.

Tags: [Israel](#), [Palestine](#), [streets](#), [politics](#)

Writer/s: [Kate Sands](#)

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He walks alongside the park toward Sydney Road, the starlings shrill against the darkening light. The peak hour traffic moves sluggishly, brake lights streaming luminescent red into the distance. Head bent into the wind, he thinks of his brother, as he does most days around this time. A tram sways past, crammed with city workers and students released from the office and the desk, but he doesn't break the rhythm of his step. Reaching the intersection, instead of waiting for the traffic lights to change, he darts through the stationary and slowly moving cars, just missing the oncoming barrage from the opposite direction.

What do these people know of life and death, he reflects, living their material lives in this strange and far-flung country. Here, where there is no god but a sporting hero, no fear but of failing to score: drugs, girls, cars, marks, goals. Hating them for their naivety, he envies them their security, their fun loving, simplistic nationalism, at the same time wincingly aware of his own inconsistency. Here, land, work, safety, these are not at issue—they're readily available; there's no need to fight for them. These people have no idea, he thinks grimly. For his mother struggling on in Gaza, working and grieving too hard, he

can do nothing. He is not his brother and could never replace him. So clever, so devout, it was inevitable, he now realises, that he be enlisted to the cause, the Jihad. Sooner or later.

He is so tired of this struggle, so sick of the carnage, the broken promises, the struggle for mutual recognition that the old men on both sides will never allow themselves to broker, being too mired in hate and in history to make the necessary concessions. By the time his generation is in power they will be the same, he imagines, disfigured by fear and the need for retribution, or, like him they will have turned away, walked away from politics, from that necessary identification. For some time now, he has wanted to get away, leave it all behind, at least for a while. His mother isn't even aware of the main reason he has come to Australia; it is not to live with his uncle and cousins, not to study. He has followed a girl, a girl he first met when he worked in a cafe near the hospital, a med student whom, it would seem, he has followed to the ends of the earth.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Kate Sands.