



Source: Steven Erlanger, 'Events prod U.S. to make new push for Mideast deal', *New York Times online*, 17/08/07.

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I cannot say for sure how care gets lost in wars, but it is not only, as you may think, in the killings and the rapes, in the frenzied and obvious evils. It is also in the less brutal signs of decay: the loss of love of land, of animals, of women, of all the living, growing, breathing, caring, and therefore supposedly weaker parts of this world. Did you notice there—I didn't include children. No, they are needed. The species must go on, no matter what the cost may be. This is where the care thing comes back. For the care is the cost. Or perhaps the care reveals the cost—hope you can follow my still far-too-careless thoughts.

Did you hear that? Did you hear that pause? The simple thing that is needed in order to start to care; the slightest, the minutest pause in which you stop thinking and you let your body show you how things are. It will not be your mind showing you. You can't hope for such an easy way out—hygienic, logical, no great stakes involved. For the truth is, all is at stake here. In that minutest yet most difficult pause you are bound to see it all. What you will see is the denial of our own care spread around us in wreckages we have left behind. It is not an easy sight. It may leave you blind, like that boy who hurt so much he now no longer sees. But that is not what I was going to talk to you about.

I must tell you about carcasses. I have been most fascinated by animal carcasses; I became aware of them in Crete, hanging outside small shops in Heraklion, oblivious and obvious proofs of our carnivore nature, their bloody, half-consumed parts dangling in the sun waiting to be eaten and somehow it was simple and true to who we really were: the Minotaur's children.

And then I took you to visit my parents and we went for that walk and there were all these leftover bits of a carcass, with meat cut off from it and eaten obviously, leftovers people threw out of their car in passing, along with open bags of rubbish now fallen out and spread down the mountain slope, exposing their waste. I couldn't understand it. We were already used to the bits of rubbish, the careless proof of our people's tourist habits made worse by the lawlessness of the post-inter-semi war years: empty bags of chips and plastic bottles and bits of used toilet paper and broken toys and shoes, rusting washing machines and all the rest of it, the tons of it that already upset me; for miles on end on the way to my hometown along the river trees lined with plastic bags dried by the sun and hanging from them like so many dead animals. But this was something different.

And I don't agree with my sister, who starts talking about recycling and how businesses are already being opened that will consume it all in no time and still make money on it while I waste my—or is it her—time going on about it like some western news agency. Hate to say it, but that reminds me of that story of her, two-and-a-bit years old, being beaten by this nanny while my mother was at work. And how once, mum came home earlier than usual and found her then only child all red and crying but my sister said not to worry for the nanny would put cream on it and it would all disappear. She is everything to me, and I want to protect her, don't misunderstand me, but how can I do that if she just keeps denying that someone has done her harm and waits for the cream to be put on so no proof would remain...

I want the proof. I want the dead to start appearing down country lanes and haunt these zombies out of their murderous dens and onto these roads littered with leftovers of their rotten conscience...I want to see them run in frenzy, mad, for I don't know how else this could possibly ever change, to be a place for me to love and want to return to.

For that is what this is all about, you see; I have had enough. Enough of new languages, enough of learning the manners and food habits and conversation modes and people's names and bra size conversions and weather changes. Enough of flats that don't belong to me and that I don't wish to own, for I know well enough it is not all about the money, although so much of it is. And suitcases. I particularly hate the suitcases, dragging them around airports as if I was just another globetrotter when it is enough to check my passport and my account balance and you'd know it all. The difference between the small children in my country who now, again, have to walk several miles on foot to their local school and me at this fancy foreign university, is in fact that they have the decency and pride to be who they are. I hate to say it, but in between all these different countries and languages I no longer am who I am, if you can understand my somehow less and less careful thoughts.

You see I wanted to speak to you with such care. I wanted to cherish you and be everything you ever wanted me to be but this is how it is, I'm afraid. If you come close, all you'll ever get is this screaming and biting and a crying fit.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Branislava Kuburovic.*