

Live from Gaza¹

Sarah M. Saleh

September 2021

funeral these headlines

their insidious &

the facts

the theatricality of chaos

our lands

our traumas

right to self-defence

until 'complete quiet'

yesterday &

today &

tomorrow

report the stories of

siren

shelter

monster

mayhem

&

death toll

the bias of those

under bombardment

the false equivalence

the certainty

in script

&

circumstance

in distortion

in the twitch and spasm

the absolute lie loss

telling

the truth

&

power

of

the narrative

the may/be in the testimony

the complicated in the detail

the question in alleged

the myth in question

existence

is
assault
is
escalation
is
conflict
is
dozens killed
is

air strikes

investigation

is
children
is
shield
is
the militants
is
schools
is
sides

Gaza

is
retaliation
is
the buildings
is
humanitarian crisis
is
strip
is
ceasefire

freedom

is
sand
is
world
is
cage
is
murder
is
ours

existence is

assault is
escalation is
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dozens killed is
airstrike is
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the militants is
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Gaza is
retaliation
the buildings is
humanitarian crisis is
strip is
ceasefire is
freedom is
sand is
world is
cage is
murder is
ours is

In memory of²

In memory of Baraa al-Gharabli
In memory of Mustafa Obaid
In memory of Yazan al-Masri
In memory of Marwan al-Masri
In memory of Rahaf al-Masri
In memory of Ibrahim al-Masri
In memory of Hamada al-Emour
In memory of Ammar al-Emour
In memory of Mahmoud Tolbeh
In memory of Yahya Khalifa
In memory of Fawziya Abu Faris
In memory of Muhammad-Zain al-Attar
In memory of Amira al-Attar
In memory of Islam al-Attar
In memory of Suheib al-Hadidi
In memory of Yahya al-Hadidi
In memory of Osama al-Hadidi
In memory of Abdurrahman al-Hadidi
In memory of Yara al-Qawlaq
In memory of Hala al-Qawlaq
In memory of Rula al-Qawlaq
In memory of Zaid al-Qawlaq
In memory of Qusai al-Qawlaq
In memory of Adam al-Qawlaq
In memory of Ahmad al-Qawlaq
In memory of Hana al-Qawlaq
In memory of Dima al-Ifranji
In memory of Yazan al-Ifranji
In memory of Mira al-Ifranji
In memory of Amir al-Ifranji
In memory of Dana Ishkontana
In memory of Lana Ishkontana
In memory of Yahya Ishkontana
In memory of Zain Ishkontana
In memory of Tala Abu Elouf
In memory of Tawfiq Abu Elouf
In memory of Rafeef Abu Dayer

In memory of Dima Asaliyah
 In memory of
 In memory of
 In memory of
 In memory of
 In memory o
 In memory
 In memor
 In memo
 In mem
 In me
 In m
 In
 I

Notes

¹ This poem was first published in 2022 in *Rabbit: A Journal for Nonfiction Poetry* 34 (January): 48-53. The last section of this poem was inspired by M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong! #24*.

² This list with names of children killed in Israel's attack on Gaza in May 2021 is not exhaustive. There were dozens more Palestinians, including children.

Sarah M Saleh is the daughter of migrants from Palestine, Egypt, and Lebanon, living on Gadigal land. A human rights campaigner, poet and writer, her pieces have been published in English and Arabic in various national and international outlets and anthologies including the *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Meanjin*, *Overland Journal*, *The Sunday Paper*, and *Rabbit Poetry*. She is co-editor of the 2019 anthology *Arab, Australian, Other: Stories on Race and Identity*. Sara is the first poet to win both the Australian Book Review's 2021 Peter Porter Poetry Prize and the Overland Judith Wright Poetry Prize 2020. She is currently developing her first novel *Songs For The Dead and The Living* as a recipient of the inaugural Affirm Press Mentorship for Sweatshop Western Sydney.