

Set in  
The Gulf War.  
(Baghdad)

# Poetry Across Time • Conflict

## The Yellow Palm

each stanza is  
one complete sentence  
One mini story snapshot.

right

hearing

masacre  
and  
destruction  
in a place  
of peace

touch

smell

repetition

As I made my way down Palestine Street  
I watched a funeral pass - death is a consequence  
all the women waving lilac stems  
around a coffin made of glass  
and the face of the man who lay within  
who had breathed a poison gas.

As I made my way down Palestine Street  
I heard the call to prayer  
and I stopped at the door of the golden mosque  
to watch the faithful there  
but there was blood on the walls and the muezzin's eyes  
were wild with his despair.

As I made my way down Palestine Street  
I met two blind beggars  
And into their hands I pressed my hands  
with a hundred black dinars; kindness  
and their salutes were those of the Imperial Guard  
in the Mother of all Wars. friendship, solidarity.

As I made my way down Palestine Street  
I smelled the wide Tigris,  
the river smell that lifts the air  
in a city such as this;  
but down on my head fell the barbarian sun  
that knows no armistice. beauty

As I made my way down Palestine Street  
I saw a Cruise missile, Violence  
a slow and silver caravan  
on its slow and silver mile,  
and a beggar child turned up his face  
and blessed it with a smile.

As I made my way down Palestine Street  
under the yellow palms  
I saw their branches hung with yellow dates  
all sweeter than galaams, - peaceful greeting  
and when that same child reached up to touch,  
the fruit fell in his arms. Ambiguous ending  
positive/peaceful?  
or explosion/blast?

ROBERT MINHINNICK

CONTEMPORARY  
POETRY

way knocks  
fruit off? (negative)

- Peaceful
- Violence
- War & Death

As I - autobiographical  
real  
in the moment

little hints of  
beauty, peace, normality

Consequences  
'Poppies'  
'At the Border.'

Chaos/ "In the  
moment"

Compares well  
with -  
Bayonet Charge  
Belfast Confetti  
Charge of L.B.  
Come on, come  
back

This poem shows that Iraq is still  
a peaceful place - the last stanza shows  
affection, sympathy and kindness

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# (Bagaeae ) - vow.

## Poetry Across Time o Conflict

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| my way down Palestine Street .

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## Comparing Two Poems

	At the Border, 1979	The Yellow Palm
symbolism	"thick iron chain"	"I watched a funeral pass - death into their hands I pressed my hands friendship solidarity"
repetition	"the same colour, the same texture"	Slow and silver caravan... on its slow and silver mile. "As I" repeated at the beginning of each stanza
contrast	Attitude of adults: "Now our mothers were crying." Attitude of children: "My right leg in this country, my left leg in the other"	Peace/Beauty: "lilac stems / blessed it" with a smile, "Sweeter than salaams." Violence/War: "Poison gas / blood on" the walls / "muzzies eyes wild with his despair"
Religious imagery	"A man bent down and kissed his muddy homeland"	"Sweeter than salaams"
Natural imagery	"The same chain of mountains encompassed all of us"	"The barbarian sun" "The river smell that lifts the air" "I saw their branches hung with yellow daisies"
Children's innocence/lack of awareness	"My sister put her leg across it"	"The beggar child turned up his face, and blessed it with a smile"

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