



I Am Yusuf and This Is My Brother **Amir Nizar Zuabi**

In Palestine, January 1948, the British Mandate ends, and the United Nations vote on who will control what part of the land. War begins. Yusuf is a young Palestinian growing up in the village of Baissamoon with his brother Ali, surrounded by conflict. In this speech, Yusuf reflects on the war.

(Bullets whistle by.)

YUSUF: The south army is fighting the north army and the wind blows.
Where is everyone? Hiding in the bushes?
The leaves on the trees are fighting gravity and the wind is fighting the branches
And the urge to howl
Now the Army is attacking from all fronts!
The wheatsheaves fight against their ripeness and the hard working ants.
The stone walls of our houses fight the salt in our tears and the shrubs.
The rain is attacking tears
And the white of our bones bleaches the whiteness of the clouds.
Where is everyone? Running through the olive groves?
The tank is attacking the rice on our plates
And the bitter coffee in our tiny rattling cups.
The cows attack the grass and the grass gives shelter to the dead.
The sheep attack our wool coats and the shepherd on the cross.
And the donkeys resist forgetfulness with stubbornness.
The machinegun is spreading sesame on my grandmother's bread
And her warm greeting to a passing guest
Where is everyone? Hiding in the wells?
The airplanes are fighting the butterflies
And the silver mosquitoes swam round the eyes of the dead dog.
The hungry children bite off their elbows to attack their empty stomachs.
The marching army attacks the snakes in the fields with the stomp of their boots
And the hand grenade attacks the hands and the orange fruits on the trees.
Mice attack the flour sacks.
Flowers attack the graves.
Where is everyone? Hiding under their beds?
The bullets race the wasps and my heart is racing its galloping horses
And the pigeons swirl round the white flags that were my mother's dowry sheets
And the blushing blood of her purity is washed by the black blood of dead hens.
Where is everyone? Gone to the dust and the tents over the hills?
Where is everyone? Where are the smells of cooking food?
Where are the greetings and good mornings of the dawn?
Where are the villagers with their sourdough dreams?
Where is everyone? Am I alone? Has time ended?

Is it the beginning? When will it end?

Act 3, 'The Attack on Baissamoon - 25 June 1948'