



## ONE GAZA FAMILY OBSERVES A GRIM HOLIDAY IN WARTIME<sup>1</sup>

— SHAINDEL BEERS

Yesterday my son learned to open the deadbolt.  
Upset about his toys forgotten at daycare,  
he slipped out the front door while I was changing  
clothes, tried to go back to get them himself.  
When I came out of the bedroom, he was gone.  
For those two minutes, my heart stopped  
until I scooped him up crying in the driveway.  
Today, I thought of the mothers of Gaza.  
We listened to the news while driving to daycare.  
One Palestinian child dead every hour. A reporter  
was interviewing a family celebrating Eid al-Fitr.  
There are 53 people staying in this three-bedroom  
apartment, including eight babies. At the sound-clip  
of the babies crying, Liam asked, *Baby?*  
*Are you all right?* The reporter is the same one

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<sup>1</sup> This is after the story of the same title on NPR's All Things Considered.



who interviewed me about my first book, who  
helped me dismantle the violence of my childhood.  
I want her to be safe, this woman I spent a few hours  
with in a radio studio, a few minutes with on the phone,  
I want the babies to be safe, their mothers,  
their fathers. I don't believe in a god,  
neither Christian, nor Jewish, nor  
Muslim, but I believe in the peace that can  
inhabit a human heart. Meanwhile, in the story,  
a four-year-old boy chooses his holiday present,  
a toy gun. He delights in the rat-a-tat of the rifle-fire.

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Shaindel Beers is author of the poetry collections *A Brief History of Time* (Salt Publishing, 2009), *The Children's War and Other Poems* (Salt, 2013), and *Secure Your Own Mask* (White Pine Press, 2018). Her poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. She is currently an instructor of English at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, Oregon, in eastern Oregon's desert, and serves as poetry editor of *Contrary*.