

You have  
lost two wars  
and no one tells you  
Why

Poems by  
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after Quabbani

You have lost two wars,  
and no one tells you why.

Candor in one's servants is the crux  
of Historical weight. It is the greatest lack-  
the most missed particle in the flux  
of an Upper East Side afternoon  
or of an Algerian century.

You have lost two wars, and no one tells you why.

Those who talk don't know, those who know  
don't talk. Sometimes people die and  
Rank is at fault- the fallacy  
of Value in the realm of observation.  
No one cares what the bell-boy saw  
in the second floor hallway  
because he is young, perceived as dumb,  
or doesn't have a mastery of  
"the native tongue".

You have lost two wars,  
and no one tells you why.

It is true that Power is a deafness  
"the known" a loaded fiction  
and "control" a cute, but dangerous idea.

It is true the eyes of the Rich are often drawn  
from not knowing why they aren't satisfied  
-where they possibly could have gone wrong.

You have lost two wars,  
and no one tells you why.



GM '06

## Purgatory

One day when you're turning in your hole  
your grave will read "logistics put him here"  
the other dead will make fun of your soul  
you will have left it all undone.

Try to explain how hard it would have been  
to change the names on the accounts  
to rent a car, to drive three thousand miles

the angels reward you with their mocking smiles.

"women" you sigh.  
Correction: a woman.

"my lungs" you say  
"weren't that strong".

"and what if after all was said and done-  
she didn't want me?"

"What a waste to change your life for love".

Justice is not a simple word  
or a simple thing  
to make, to seek.

It's not blow for a blow  
eye for an eye  
not your most closely guarded thing  
for mine.

Justice is a practice  
that follows on attention  
to the center of the action  
to what the players bind themselves  
to and why.



I choose you among them all  
and that means I stand or fall  
by the side of a man  
I've never known  
to call any place or thing  
his own.

You would never make me say  
alright, I'll stay.

By choice I remain, the bus moves away  
and the only journey left to me  
is the one going on within the borders of me  
from the morning when  
you're inside of me  
to the night  
when you're inside of me.



Young when we took each other  
young when you took me back

a little bit older when I started to crack

at seventeen you made me want middle-age  
and my interest~~st~~ in trapping, keeping surfaced

when we were still young, I built you a cage  
and stupidly, you minced and crept into it.

it was a year of showing off the ring,  
before I cheated.

I remember looking at the ring on my~~l~~ finger  
on my hand on her shoulder  
when she fingerfucked me in the breakroom.

when we were young we'd make a break  
we said, with the usual story  
of you betray me, I resent you  
and divorce alimony testimony custody

young still when we found it's not so easy

young still when you called me untrustworthy  
with a hot tear on your tongue

a little bit older when I went crazy  
and you did divorce me  
and now all that's over and done.



When the gulls alight on midtown cranes  
they say by their presence  
'don't forget'- the wide unknown  
expanse of waves to the east  
the unknown underneath, the forces  
you could never have the slightest  
chance of controlling.

from such a height and to such eyes  
we are flotsam in our high-heeled boots  
debris as we loosen our belts and ties  
and saunter in for a post-work drink.



you will, in some moment of your life  
be witness to the ~~most~~ <sup>sculpted</sup> beauty  
held by a person who will later betray you,  
months or years hence, you will  
Wish fruitlessly, for that moment  
of witness to have never existed.

the death of Doyle

Raise your glass to the dark stranger  
how brief his time, how short his path  
one year from a kitten-box on Gallivan Boulevard  
to a burial box beside the Ellis street fence.

It was rat poison killed Doyle  
killed him --before his time  
he had a proper wake in a Dot Ave. pub  
and now I've put his death in rhyme.

The six-toed paw of a tuxedo cat  
could be the hand of God  
blood congealed around his white-whiskered mouth-  
there's more to it than what we saw...