

Before It's Too Late
A Collection of Poems on Palestine
Eve Strasser

Jiddo

The surviving history of my family
Lives in a ninety-year-old man
Who has weathered through war,
Bombings,
And strokes
That have tried to make you forget

Forget your father's orchard in Palestine
A leather factory in Jaffa,
A rental property,

Forget your childhood in Lebanon
The smell of the sea from the shores of Beirut,
And meeting Teta in America,

Forget running from the carnage
That has refused to cease long enough
For you to breathe

Even though you can't remember
All the tawla games we've played,
I will never let go of
Your memories that live in me

Of Fruit and Diaspora

Between Tel Aviv and Jaffa
My family had an orchard
With rich citrus fruits
And a garden of vegetables
And a beautiful view.
That's all anyone can remember.

The Israeli government wanted to build a highway
And they did
And they told us
That we'd owe millions of dollars
If we wanted to keep our land

So we let them keep it
And we left.

Untitled

I wish I'd been born in Phoenicia.

At least I could die

Being able to kiss my own soil

Memory of Middle School

When I was twelve my geography teacher had our class debate

Israel or Palestine?

It was funny to watch them vote at the end,

Deciding my people didn't have a right

To the land on which we were born.

They won the debate

Near unanimously- except for my vote of course.

I went home in tears

Untitled

I hate when we're on the news
Because it means something bad happened again
I hate remembering where I'm from
And I hate crying because I am stuck
Across an ocean and a sea

I'm glad I'm writing this on my computer,
Otherwise I'd get the paper wet.

Untitled

You have not known beauty until you have seen my home
She is just as lovely, even with her scars
If you can hold onto her for just a moment
You will see how deep are the pools of her eyes