

HOW TO SURVIVE A BOMBING RAID IN A SYRIAN VILLAGE, 2018

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Break....It. break. It break..... Break. whine. Was smooth It break. Broken. Find. Finds. Something to. To holds to. Grab. Hold it, yet lightly. Even when it doesn't exist. Absorb, mix it into broken marrow. Don't! Mix. Move. Yes. Where.

Learn the name of each pilot. Each navigator. Bombardier. Computer. There is nothing you can do with this information but know it. Knowing will help you.

Detach yourself from any God to whom you hitherto prayed. Any God that could sanction these bombs down upon anyone could not or would will not help you. It has nothing to do with any sin you may ever have committed. This bombing on you is not your fault. It is your fate. It has nothing to do with the fantasies of gods. It has everything to do with the human need to create those fantasies.

Learn beforehand the makeup of the bombs, what goes into them, how and by whom and where they are made. What metals, chemicals, computers, dimensions, weight, what cost, rate of falling speed. You cannot outrun them. But come to know all of this in detail. You must become a shaman of arcane knowledge.

All memory of your life until the moment this bombing begins, you must assign to someone you know or someone even whom you don't know. Every joy pleasure loss pain delight. You must become no one.

Study the prayer of renaming. Rename yourself. If your name is Rajul Eadi, rename yourself Muejiza Haya. If your name is Hana Safed, rename yourself Ziv Harai. Be prepared to die. This is the creed of the man who has learned to live. It is a calm fury. It will contribute, not by virtue of its belief, but by virtue of its serenity alone, it will contribute to your survival.

Imagine that each bomb is a horse. Lao Tse wrote that you can pull a king off his horse if you are willing to die. These bombs are not horses. No king sent them. Yet, if you imagine each bomb a horse, if you imagine yourself

willing to pull a king off of each bomb, that will contribute to your survival.

Don't go home. Don't seek shelter. Every structure will collapse, killing you. Stay in the streets where you've lived among the shops and cafés and your friends and the days of your life. Open air protects you.

Forget your family. Forget your wife. Your two sons. Your daughter. Plunge yourself into the uncanny survival-trance of a bombing raid. If your wife, your sons, your daughter do survive, you will be overwhelmed by a joy far greater than the distraction now of your wish for their safety, a joy whose anticipation in hope will drain your will for survival. If they do die, your grief, if you give in to it now, will destroy the sinew of your survival. If their death does come to pass, it will be a grief greater than any God you have abandoned.

If every one of your loved ones does die, still, they would have prayed for your survival. You cannot live without them, but you cannot honor the passions of their love for you unless you survive.

You have two kinds of words in your language. During the raid, use neither. If you have a third, use that.

Plato that only the dead know the end of war. We go on, living as openly as possible, as loving as possible, as passionate for life as possible, as ordinary human beings—women, men, and children—Catholic, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Circassian, all—each with our own kind of coffee, our own kind of prayer, our own kind of language—in this world of Plato, as warriors and peacemakers, witness to this bombing that you will survive among the rubble of this day.

The sun is too far away for you to scratch it with reality.

Stay warm. By evening, you may have no clothes left.

And he was a little boy then, and he was in his bath, standing, and his mother beside him very close gazing into her mirror, doing what? Must have been her make-up. Yes. Doing her make-up. It was for him a happiness like no other. Releasing the blood in his veins. And years later, he lay on the banks of a stream and the wind blew over him neither warm nor cold. Go back and memory brings it to him. It is a happiness like no other. And he

says, I will never leave here. And he said I never want to leave here. And he will and he would.

On the edge of the rooftop a woman with the assault rifle takes aim. Whether it is at you or herself, she does not pull the trigger. Neither does she ever abandon that pose. As you and your oldest son, years later, drink coffee together on that street, you are inured to her presence; he is not. And then the building collapses from its wounds and your whole country is shattered from the shock of it and for the first time in his life your eldest son says the word *blood*. In that place where they are, your youngest son and your daughter whirl around each other. As you get up to join them in this whirling your eldest son repeats that word *goodbye*.

Look around at the others who survived. See the way they look at you. You are a miracle—you should be dead. Are you? Are you dead? You're alive. Just like they are alive.

Go home. If it still exists. See who in your family has survived, who has not. Go to your closet, open the door. A thousand and twelve bombs tumble out. These are not the toys of a childhood. They are live bombs. Carefully, cautiously, slowly discard them.

Help rescue the living. Bury the dead. Family lines no longer matter. Bury whomever needs burying.

Everything is changed. Nothing has changed. This is life. This is not life.

While you are not become a bomb and while everything has changed into the same again, you, looking into the mirror of your village, you see Eros and Thanatos embrace in a vision of yourself you had not ever seen in any mirror before. It can blind pain; it can burn your vision of devotion to rubble to collapse to bombs to burial to the living as to the dead. You will go forth into the woods to find them as they embrace the water of the river that flows from their earth into the mirror of your vision.

They walked along the brookside then they stopped they listened to the water burbling. They lay down on the grass. The sun was in his eyes. He said to her what do you see here with your eyes closed. But she couldn't answer him. Or she wouldn't answer him. In any case she never told him. Perhaps he knew. But, only perhaps. Because someday he will die having lived with

this knowledge, or without ever having known.

The opposite of hatred is not peace the opposite of hatred is not joy the
opposite of hatred is not indifference the opposite of hatred is an absence of
hatred is to connect is fire as fire is mountain as mountain is eye as human
no matter what it sees

Tonight, when you you sleep, your eyes close from deep inside your brain,
from somewhere way down in the sub-thalamic nucleuse or somewhere
like that. Everything you've seen today now lives somewhere in your brain.
When you fall asleep, you find yourself in love with each moment—even
the most grotesque—so, for a moment, it passes through your brain as im-
age thought or language, whether you sleep or not. If you don't sleep, you
will have the whole night to yourself.

The bombs float up into opened bomb-bay doors. The TU-95 bombers
turn back. Loaded with their bombs, they fly away and where to it mat-
ters not. Humankind is good. No, it is not. The bombs do rain down. Real
people die.

And then there was a time in his memory when they broke the sky. And yet
it never left him. And you came and you saw him there by the stream and
it was another time. But this you said to him whether this stream was here
yesterday or tomorrow it is endless it an endless stream it releases the flow in
the veins, freely.

On this road to Desolation were you to cry out, not many, not many are
it is a bomb of its own in the brain, the visitation of flooded flooded but
flooded with quick light and the bombs cannot be anything but what they
are, they cannot be not-bombs. You have survived. You can be no other than
yourself. As it was, it will be no more. As it is, it will be now and forever.

On this dessicate road, Desolation, whomever you meet walking, even if it's
yourself and you are alone, you will see in whomever it is, the will to survive
but not only the will to survive.