

Three Poems from Poems for Peace session
Braunschweig, Germany
Peace Day 2013

Tell me

Is peace what happens when the fighting stops and
when all arms are locked away, for later use?
Is peace sifting through rubble - for half-burnt photographs
and a saucepan that's still whole?

Is peace standing in line for rations?
Is it rebuilding your house, brick by brick?
Is peace learning to live without your leg?
Without your father, without your child?

Is peace remembering gunshots whenever
fireworks paint the sky with explosions?
Is peace stocking your home with more food
than you'll need, just in case?

Tell me,
is peace teaching your children how
everything started and
whose fault it was?

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My Moments of Peace

Morning fog lifting over the golden sea cliffs of the Californian coastline,
The silence in a redwood grove,
A bobcat watching you from the roadside,
The first cup of coffee over a morning campfire.

Sheep huddling mute together,
Their faces an expressionless mask;
The red kite wheeling overhead calling for its child
While a jay disturbs the silence in the distant trees.

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The hush in the cathedral
After the Bach violin concerto.
My meadow at daybreak with dew fresh on the grass;
My moments of peace.

Lawrence Guntner

How to Make Peace (2013)

Rip the crescents off your flags
And off the minarets!
That will give you C's galore,
The smaller ones passing for P's
Minus the downward strokes.

The downward strokes you get
By slashing up your crucifixes
In bedrooms, schoolrooms, courtrooms
And oh! cathedrals. They make
Fine letters too, E's for instance.

And if you then look at the stars
Of David on your uniforms
You'll see, with just a little squint,
They break up recognizably
Into a fan of A's.

What you need now is a bunch
Of hungry children fighting over
Who's first to lay out in the sand
The word and never bothering
How easy peace is made.

Ottmar Bauer