

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

SINCE 1815

Spring 2024
VOLUME 309, NUMBER 1

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northamericanreview.org

RATES

\$15.00 US per copy (\$18.00 in Canada).
Double issues \$30.00 (\$36.00 in Canada).
Individual subscriptions: \$44.00 per
year/\$83 for two in the US; \$52 per year/\$99
for two in Canada; \$55 per year/\$105
elsewhere. Institutional rates apply.

The NAR is housed on the ancestral
lands of the Báxoje or Bah Kho-Je
(Iowa), oθaakiiwaki · hina · ki (Sauk)
and Meškwahki-aša-hina (Fox), Očhéthi
Šakówinj (Sioux), Umó^{ho} (Omaha),
and Hochač (Ho-Chunk), as well as those
tribal nations who are contemporary
caretakers of land in Iowa, including
the Meskwaki: Sac and Fox Tribe of
the Mississippi in Iowa.

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These hints, dropped as it were from sleep and night, let us use in broad day. The student is to read history actively and not passively; to esteem his own life the text, and books the commentary. Thus compelled, the Muse of history will utter oracles, as never to those who do not respect themselves. I have no expectation that any man will read history aright, who thinks that what was done in a remote age, by men whose names have resounded far, has any deeper sense than what he is doing to-day.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "History" (1841)

Since late last year, the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict has escalated dramatically, to say the least. The October 7 attack by Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis. Thousands were injured and hundreds more taken hostage, leading to massive and ongoing retaliation by the Israeli military and regular exchange of rocket fire from both sides. As of this writing, the death toll in Gaza sits at an estimated twenty thousand. Millions of Palestinians have been uprooted. These are bleak facts. Heavy, heartbreaking facts. From the distant vantage of North America, many impassioned responses by perceived allies and enemies alike have drawn clear political lines, separating those who belong on the side of justice from those who deserve our scorn. Such entrenched enmity assumes the impossibility of sympathizing with the plight of one group without also harboring hatred toward the other. The steady stream of bad news is dispiriting, and the images of death and suffering are difficult to witness—and sometimes to understand. Grief reigns.

In her ethereal poem "Anticipatory Grief as Phases of Moons," selected by Diane Seuss as the winner of this year's James Hearst Poetry Prize, Tara Mesalik MacMahon describes the feeling of all-pervasive grief as an elusive thing that "I cannot un-picture," as "thoughts I cannot unthink," as something that "I forget to understand." Inescapable, ineffable, inexplicable. Grief has a way of folding time into itself so that you exist in a perpetual state of memory and anticipation, neither waxing nor waning but doing both at once. When fully unfurled, grief presents us with an emotional palimpsest.

The Holy Land of Israel and Palestine can itself be read as a grief-ridden palimpsest, retaining the social and political traces of the last seventy-five years since the First Arab-Israeli War, with all of its greater and lesser eruptions of violence and temporary reprieves. Everything that has transpired before threatens—or promises—to do so again, not as a cycle but as something that has never truly ceased. "The past is never dead," said