

Night Journey 67: WAR

War Poem by Lisa Harrison and Gary Horn

Painting by Gary Horn

Night Journey 67 is a contemplation of war through art, painted with the ghosts of mind and memory, and forgotten words both written and spoken. Its purpose is to remind us of both the lives lost through war, extinguished though they never existed, and the survivors of its carnage, fenced-in and segregated into a life of nonexistence. This is the inhumanity I have seen and continue to see, and have tried to paint in *Night Journey 67: War*.

The painting is comprised of three panels. The left panel represents the military and terrorist perpetrators of war and genocide, while the right catalogues its victims. The foundation for these panels is bombed and destroyed cities and homes. The center panel is a moral plea for sanity, created by the juxtaposition of Michelangelo's *Pieta* and two Syrians arranged in a similarly cradled pose. One is dying for our sins, while the other dying because of our sins.

The poem was constructed randomly, in a manner similar to the method artist Tristan Tzara used in creating his Dada Poems in the early 20th Century. The words and phrases used in the poem were appropriated directly from published journalistic accounts of war, sourced from a variety of publications quoting war correspondents, war participants, and war's victims. Once source-writing material was gathered, the poem was constructed by alternating verses and links, to prevent contrivance and allow the poem to take its own direction.

It is the duty of every individual to examine and contemplate the causes and consequences of the wars that plague the lives of humanity. We must stop accepting war's death and destruction as a defensible national self-interest, overlooking and ignoring the human suffering of war's innocent victims. We, the people of the world, must learn to ignore the desires, demands, and commands of our political leaders and follow our conscience of human compassion that respects the lives and well-being of all.

WAR

Blood has been flowing for days –
most from gunshot **wounds** suffered in crossfire.
So many patients have flooded the hospital.

On the frontline of the increasingly bloody **conflict**,
thick black smoke could be seen rising.

The sound of shelling, rockets, and fighter jets could be heard,
with stray bullets finding their way.
At least 86 people were **killed** Saturday.

The **fighting** was bloody, and the civilian toll high.
The **desecration** was met with outrage.

The attack, which was immediately — and gleefully — laid claim to,
builds on a rise in extremist **violence**: Terrorism - it is always **fanatical**, mindless, and mad.

Martyrdom ... Victory ... no escape from **Slavery** ...

Today:

22 people, including 17 children, lost their lives.

Another 186 people were injured in the attack.

Bodies of the slain were strewn across the ground.

I cannot sleep.

I cannot forget what has happened.

If you were not safe there, where were you safe?

This **attack** is the first of the storm, and a **warning** to those who wish to learn:

You will learn the culture of Death.

Let us learn from history, rather than repeat it.

The **evil** in today's world - we must combat it with the greatest energy.

It's very difficult.

I don't have the answer.

I'm not a government.

I'm not anything.

I'm just people.

The last great battle ... sets the stage for **the end** of times, inspiring random acts of **violence** ...

Many women are repeatedly **raped** and **abused** by their captors.

Through **tears** of sadness and frustration,

hundreds of girls have committed **suicide**.

We heard one HUGE blast -

Violence has exploded!

A house collapses -

killing a 3-year-old child ...

a 35 year-old mother, five months pregnant, dies.

A **harbinger** of the imminent end of the world.

God save it from the evil eye.

What is it that America is fighting *for*?

Retreating from its core principles,

with streams of black smoke uncoiling into the sky ...

dependent on international conflict for its legitimacy:

The rhetoric of **war** is puerile.

We know only the language of **violence**.

We've tried negotiation, and it didn't work.

So now we will **fight**.

Anyone who raises his hand to **harm** us will pay dearly.

We will exact from them the full cost.

Ramping up a newly muscular presence,
U.S. military Cargo planes gave 50 tons of ammunition to rebel groups.
More Bloodshed, more Blame.
But no apparent moves toward peace.

Among the old tombstones ... I found a new grave.
A popular rendezvous spot.

War is, after all, the one social context in which **heinous** actions are permitted.
Historic **justice** - It hungers for **genocide**.

Xenophobic Nationalism
Desert Pirates
Fledgling Government -
their State rejects peace as a matter of principle.

Amidst a spate of **stabbings**,
youths throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails -
we will not hesitate to use all means at our disposal to restore peace

155 people needed medical care
26 were wounded by rubber bullets, six by live bullets, and five reportedly beaten.

They don't have a goal.
*They want **revenge**.*
*They want **blood**.*

The logic is always the same: We must do something.
Bombing is something.
We must bomb.
The Western, and especially **American**, concept of war emphasizes the kinetic and the tangible—

Anxiety makes everybody a little less humane.
It cannot be said that we are engaged in a war of *civilizations*.
What *is* war? Is winning without fighting possible?

You can't bomb **terrorism**—you can only bomb people.
“If a man beats his head against the wall,” the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci once wrote,
“it's his head that breaks and not the wall.”

It is a belief that, through reasoned conversation, values cohere and fanaticism recedes.
There are **formidable** obstacles ahead.

Authorities documented several **bloody** attacks.
Flashpoints of growing **violence** sparked by the spontaneous **combustion** of social media, disseminating
information and feeding **outrage**.
Armed conflict **aggravating** religious differences ...

The language of sectarianism involves **elimination** and **purification**.

Religious leaders are eager as ever to stoke the fires of **intolerance**.
Followers are mobilized by implicit or naked **sectarian** appeals.
Political conflicts are transformed into **religious** struggles.
When political dynamics fail, people turn back to religion.
Bloodshed becomes harder to contain in the region.

Let's ask ourselves why there is so much **war** and **violence**.
Irresponsible governments allow it to happen.
World **powers** talk about peace, but sell **arms** under the table.

If you declare war on **terror**, it stands to reason that **terror** might fight back.
The longer we fight, the more expensive it will be.

The West's desire to intervene in the name of civilization and Enlightenment betrays a stunning lack of self-awareness.
The only thing the US **military** has succeeded at is believing its own **propaganda**.
There is no future "diplomatic" solution that justifies continuing the **waste** of life, treasure, and national honor.

This is **disastrous**.
All thanks to your **politics**.

There are very **dangerous** words used in every **conflict**,
that make it more difficult to see a space for dialogue and political solutions,
where **armies**, religious **militias** and **extremist** groups are on the march across the region.

Our message for the governments is to take into consideration our **suffering**,
when you encourage, promote and praise the **death** of the innocent .

Good allies engage in constructive criticism.
It's a tough and dirty job, but someone has to do it.

The American **military** had parachuted 50 tons of **ammunition** to fighters.
The new **fighting** sent tens of thousands of civilians fleeing.

Intervention has **failed** to stop the **violence**.
Demonstrations to promote peace turn into **massacres**.
Dead **bodies** are often dumped in **empty** lots or alleys.

We are in this **terrible** moment of transition where sect is very high in people's minds.
Radical individuals are deliberately **fomenting** violence.

Several villages were empty.
Thousands of people on the move, with no shelter or medical support.
Extrajudicial **executions**, **torture**, **displacement** and excessive use of force filled three mass **graves**.

Journalists are **beaten** or **executed** as spies.
Children routinely witness **executions** and no longer go to school.
They are being **traumatized** by the **brutal** conduct of **war**.

The **decapitated** bodies of four men, two women and a child were found in a rural town.

Marchers walked for almost four hours with the **coffins** of the victims.
A grave found contained 76 bodies, including that of young women.
Bones, hair and personal items were dug up - evidence of **brutality**.
There could be hundreds of mass grave sites that could qualify as **genocide**.

“You can carry out all these **cowardly** airstrikes ... we’ll come to your capital cities and we’ll **kill** large numbers of your civilians. You cannot stop us from doing it.”

"I will not grant you the gift of my **hatred**."
Is the only rational response to the **apocalyptic** ideology of **hatred**.