



# Intifada

by June Jordan

**In detention in concentration camps  
we trade stories  
we take turns sharing the straw mat or a pencil  
we watch what crawls in and out of the sand  
As-Salamm'Alaykum  
The guards do not allow the blue woolen blanket  
my family traveled far to bring  
to this crepuscular and gelid cell  
where my still breathing infant son  
and I defy the purgatory implications  
of a state-created hell  
Wa'Alaikum As-Salam  
The village trembles from the heavy tanks that try  
to terrify the children:  
Everyday my little brother runs behind the rubble  
practicing the tactics of the stones against the rock  
In January soldiers broke his fingers one by one  
Time has healed his hands but not the fury  
that controls what used to be his heart  
Insha A'llah  
Close the villages  
Close the clinics  
Close the school  
Close the house  
Close the windows of the house  
Kill the vegetables languishing under the sun  
Kill the milk of the cows left to the swelling of pain  
Cut the electricity  
Cut the telephones  
Confine the people to the people  
Do Not Despair of the Mercy of Allah  
Fig trees will grow and oranges  
erupt from desert holdings on which plastic  
bullets (70% zinc, 20% glass, and 10%  
plastic) will prove blood  
soluble and fertilize the earth  
where sheep will graze  
and women no longer grieve  
and beat their breasts  
They will beat clean fine-woven rugs  
outside a house smelling of cinnamon and nutmeg  
Alhamdulillah  
So says IMAN  
the teacher of peace  
the shepherd on the mountain of the lamb  
the teacher of peace  
who will subdue the howling of the lion  
so that we may kneel  
as we must  
five times beginning just after dawn  
and ending just before dusk  
in the IBADAH of prayer**