

EULOGY FOR BASSIM CHMAIT^I

POEM BY BILLIE RAIN

SHLON'C^{II} BASSIM?

WHAT DREAMS CARRIED YOU
ACROSS GALAXIES AS YOU LAY
CAPTIVE IN FOUR WALLS?

WHAT GREAT HOPES AND FEARS
HELD YOUR LIFE IN THEIR THRALL
BEFORE IT WAS RIPPED FROM YOUR GRASP?

WHO IS SHOT IN THE STREET?
WHO IS SHOT IN THE STREET?

I SEE YOUR CHILDS PICTURE
BLOND CURLS
RIPEN INTO BLACK CLOUDS
FRAME YOUR YOUNG MAN POETS FACE.

LIKE MY LOVER

IT SEEMS IT SHOULD TAKE MORE THAN
ONE HAND TO END A LIFE
MORE THAN ONE NIGHT
ONE SNAP DECISION
ONE MAN'S ANGER
OR FEAR

I DON'T KNOW WHY HE SHOT YOU.
WAS IT BECAUSE LEBANON
SHONE FROM YOU
AND FELL OUT YOUR MOUTH?
STONES
SHELLS OF BOMBS AND BUILDINGS
PROPHETS AND OLIVE TREES
THE LEGENDARY FAIRUZ
JABAL LIBNAN^{III}

WHO RAZED THE MOUNTAIN?
WHAT DIM FORCE PULLED THE TRIGGER
AND TURNED OUT YOUR LIGHT?
WHAT RAGE IN HIS HAND
WHAT RAGE
STOPS A HEART?

YOUR HEART

JUST YOU
UNIQUE IN ALL TIME AND SPACE
THAT'S WHAT'S MISSING NOW
A CLEARCUT WHERE YOUR LUSH LIFE ONCE WAS.

EVERYONE YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN
IS GONE
WE ARE LEFT WITH THIS MURDER
AND WHAT ELSE YOU LEFT BEHIND.

SNOW FALLS SIDEWAYS
OUTSIDE MY WINDOW
I SUCK THE BITTER SALTY PIT
OF TRUTH AND SPIT

THIS IS NOT THE END



^I BASSIM CHMAIT WAS A YOUNG UNARMED LEBANESE-AMERICAN MAN WHO WAS KILLED ON THE STREET IN MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA BY DOUGLAS BATES, AN OFF-DUTY U.S. CUSTOMS OFFICER. AFTER HIS MURDER, BATES WAS NOT ARRESTED. ACCORDING TO ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, JIM AMORMINO, "WE TREATED THIS THE SAME AS WE WOULD ANY CASE. THERE WAS NO CLEAR EVIDENCE OF A CRIME BEING COMMITTED, SO THERE WAS NOTHING TO BOOK HIM ON." BASSIM'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY DISAGREE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: WWW.JUSTICEFORBASSIM.COM

^{II} WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

^{III} MOUNT LEBANON