

## Walking Home

By Masood Ashraf Raja

(Occasioned by the 2008-09 Israeli bombing of Gaza)

Like three dolls in a toy bed  
One girl, two little boys  
With peaceful faces, eyes closed  
No wounds, no blood—a clean death

The girl, a smile etched on her face  
Dreaming, probably, of a better place  
The boys, holding hands, unsmiling  
Like guardian angels walking their sister home:

Through bombed streets of the walled city  
Jumping over trash, avoiding piss and blood  
Through ranks of soldiers, columns of tanks  
Breathing gunpowder, smoke, phosphorous

Carrying their sister across the wall  
To a city of light, cafes, and pristine streets  
They stop in front of a candy store  
Silent, hopeful, cautious, a bit afraid

Then one of them, the one in blue jeans  
A white t-shirt and a black baseball hat,  
Enters, after wiping his feet on the door mat  
In his stretched hand a Jordanian coin

*Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* Vol. 1, No. 2 (2009)

Found in a dusty Gaza street, right  
By the deserted, defunct Bus stop.  
Sir, he says to the man in the candy store  
Sir, my sister would like an orange drop.