

For Mazen

I am making peace all the time now  
not as much peace  
as I would like  
but – I gave up design of the Universe.

Still – I am making peace  
in grand strokes and in small strokes.

Grand strokes  
I am making peace by knowing  
the heart of who they call my enemies

my enemies I have discovered  
are just like me.  
I am making peace  
knowing that.

Small strokes  
I am also making peace  
by telling others:  
I know those who sit on the other side  
of the peace fence  
they are just like me.

We are all loving our families  
tending to our friends  
we are all dreaming  
and trying to make the world  
safer for our children.

We are all of us peace making in this way.

My friend from across the fence gets discouraged  
he sees walls and believes they are insurmountable  
when we talk on the phone  
I remind him that we are talking.  
Sometimes when we are eating together  
he reminds me that we like the same foods.  
We love tea the same way  
minty and sweet  
strong coffee  
when we dance  
we dance to the same rhythms.

The words of our songs are different  
but even our languages have cognates  
similar structure, same roots.

One of those roots is salam shalem shalom  
it's a lofty goal but this is how we greet each other  
salaam aleikum  
aleikum as-salaam  
shalom aleikhem  
aleikhem shalom

it's not a promise  
it's a dream  
a complete dream of wholeness  
integration  
in that sense – peace  
from the pieces.  
It's a very lofty sentiment  
we say it going and coming  
as if to remember  
what we already know --

we want the same things  
and we are willing  
to remind each other of that

when we need to.

jsg  
pre-war