

## One Hundred Thousand

*Mobi Warren*  
Invasion of Iraq, 2003

The president said,  
“I am a patient man,”  
when asked how many years  
of occupation  
could be expected in Iraq.

The world held the bricks  
of King Nebuchadnezzar patient.  
For 2,600 years they lined Babylon,  
but now lie scattered and broken.

The defense secretary explained,  
It is not our policy  
to report civilian deaths.

The count was left to mothers  
who bathe the bodies,  
intimate one last time  
with elbow, small of back, silenced lips.  
Keening the names of sons and daughters  
Girls who answered to names that meant  
Garden, Deer, and Star  
*Jenan Maha Najma*  
Boys called Beauty, Quiet, Wise  
*Jamal Aram Hakim*

## Echoes of Summer

*Clyta Coder*

Cool June mornings arrive  
on the wings of the cardinal.  
Summer stretches endlessly  
like the west Texas horizon  
school a fading memory.

Buzzing bees  
join cicadas and crickets  
in friendly cacophony  
Fireflies, tiny points of light  
on balmy nights  
day follows day  
till July 4th fireworks  
sound the alarm—  
summer’s halfway gone.

Our house echoes with  
summer words—  
Are we there yet?  
How much further is it?  
I’m bored.  
John’s Dad let him go, why can’t I?  
So help me, if you kids slam  
that screen door one more time...  
I don’t care if all the other girls wear thongs,  
you might as well not wear anything.

Bright brochures tell  
of cruises not taken.  
Another summer come and gone,  
packed away with the camping gear,  
beaches empty and forlorn  
castle builders retired until next year.

## Hope

*Ann Marie Barlass*

Sometimes the maze is a labyrinth.  
The mess culminates in answers.

Sometimes the secured gate is jumped.  
The obstacles are overcome.

Scenes of raised voices and slamming doors stop replaying.  
The wincing ends and the eyes begin to open.

The light returns and running shoes are removed.  
Breathing begins again.

Learning to walk upright can be a challenge.  
Being bent for too long leaves its mark.

Sometimes leaving is the only way to stay.  
Hold on to life, as death walks away.

## Poem 739

*Emily Dickinson*

I many times thought Peace had come  
When Peace was far away —  
As Wrecked Men — deem they sight the Land —  
At Centre of the Sea —

And struggle slacker — but to prove  
As hopelessly as I —  
How many the fictitious Shores —  
Before the Harbor be —



Graffiti from a Wall in Bethlehem