

## Dispatch

Watching a human eat  
a banana counts among  
the most peaceful of things.

185 lbs. A farmer.  
Tough enough, if he wants,  
to squash me with his fists.

Capable of unpeeling  
& devouring whole bananas  
at a time! Of digesting  
each without a problem.

But he does not. Instead,  
he is ritualistic: His fingers  
go to work. He eyes  
his fellow humans & checks  
for safety, for predators.

Peeling the fruit's skin,  
he wavers for a spell,  
perhaps sensing  
an accumulation of peelings,  
all the time passing him by.

A moment of consternation  
ensues before getting on  
with business. Eyes calm,  
he discards the oxidized peel.

He understands what  
it means to finish.

## Learnt Lines

يمكنك وضع الصيد السلامة على الرجاء

At Hamra the road unspools  
around and down  
the mountains from the high corniche

untouched

another world interrupted  
at times by distant fireworks  
far below in the city.

Monday morning, the work run,  
past the post at Marad in the west  
and every time through the car window

pointing

an AK47 its hair trigger  
held by a check point child soldier  
with a nervous finger.

Blurtd

The only lines learnt  
sun dried in my memory  
the safety catch - *shukran*

## Candle Flame on the Clyde

*For Claire*

It is Friday night, my wife lights the candles, and says the prayer,  
now silently, she makes a wish, for her family's welfare,  
then she turns to me, says " Good Shabbos", and we kiss,  
and I know that all I need and all I want is this.

I turn out the light, and we leave the room in darkness,  
except for the candle flame, which sheds a little brightness.  
Later, I come back in, and watch the candle flames flicker and flit,  
reflected in the frozen water of the picture, hanging above where they sit.

It is a Duncan Shanks painting, Frozen Clyde at Crossford.  
As the candle flames dance, I watch entranced, without a word,  
and I remember staring at other frozen water, in Auschwitz Birkenau,  
at the Lake of Ashes there, where the remains of my mother's family lie.

The candle flames flare and gutter, they nearly go out, but they survive,  
and I fleetingly think, that's how it goes, with our lives.  
But I'm wrong, so wrong, for the six million died,  
and more still die, and nobody hears their cry.