

The Assassination of Sadat

by Bill Yarrow

I was in the park with Benjamin
talking to the mother of a little girl
who had undergone open heart surgery
twice and now wanted to be a doctor
and there was a speckled dog the kids
were chasing into the baseball field
and there were screams and shouts
and the terrifying music of bullets
sung at a man falling under a chair.

I was west of the baby swings
in the park with Benjamin, standing
against the last of the green benches
drenched in the gray light of early summer
watching him for just one more minute
be a little boy, but what did I know?
Just beyond the corkscrew slide
the President of Egypt was bleeding to death.

I stood in the park inspecting the earth
where the children kneel when I heard a noise
and looked up. The little girl was bending over
the wounds in the uniform of the man on the stage
saying, "It's OK, it's OK, I'm a doctor."
The spaniel had his teeth deep in the arm
of the assassin who was screaming at Benjamin
to call off his dog. All the radios were tuned
to the same station. It was a chaos of compassion.

I left the world of familiar truths,
the world of boys and dogs and baseball
fields, a world where verities wave hello,

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run after us, pull on our sleeves.
I left for the gray secret my son told me
that afternoon of open hearts.
“There are no parks anymore,” he said.
“Only Egypt exists.”

