

Melissa Mutrux

“Death of tourist ruled terrorist attack” Daily Bulletin, September 2006

Perhaps they thought, as they set the story, placing
one letter after another into the press for mass
dissemination, that it would
comfort him, in the tenuous dark between stars
to know that his death was not
just another death,
but a casualty in a war that
will not end,
that he stood with the last six of a long line
climbing stairs of two different colors in an amphitheatre
someone had years ago restored
using the wrong stone, blinking
beneath a hot sun in a golden land subdued
once so many centuries ago, thinking
of Pax Romana and domination as
a woman, someone he has come to know but not well,
trips on the stairs above him as she runs, clutching her camera
too tight and a shocking gasp of light flashes out,
sparking in the bright air like sun glinting off
swords or guns, like the impossible hope
of rescue or vengeance, of justice,
while a man in white with a chin
pale from where he has shaved off a beard worn
for years, a man who is not,
whatever they will say,
deranged, who has lived in Zarqa but never
met the man who made it famous,
who is not thinking of virgins but of a brother
lost so long ago, taken
without thought or compassion, sees the open,
red mouths of enemies as they scream in their
disbelief and ignorance, never knowing or
caring why he thinks this is an answer, and
shouts the name of his God, praying that
this death
will, finally, make someone
understand.

“Jordanian gunman found to have no links to terrorist groups: Attack deemed ‘individual act’ ”
BBC News, September 2006