

Lucy Alexander

THE CHILD ON THE WALL

As evening sets the light slanting
only a few gunshots crack
the stillness.

A boy, climbing a ruined house
sees a shadow, a starving dog,
among the tall weeds. He skips
from broken bricks to broken bricks
throws triangles of cement
and shouts to the dog to run and hide,
his father and the fighting men
will find him soon.

He has no mercy, there is none here
to spare, and besides the dog's ribs are like
the ruins of the school: the bus
left where it was ambushed,
black blood shimmering on the
vinyl seats.

The child on the wall knows
this cycle of death well
and he kicks at the weeds
growing suddenly thick and strong
in the waste of sand.