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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Adin Ljuca

In front of the decorated tree at Clinton Square

a group of protestors.

Not holding champagne but a banner:

Ceasefire.

A worthy motif for a greeting card.

Beyond the tree

on the back page of our imagined card,

People skate and make merry,

though Christmas in Bethlehem is called off.

The lights of our colorful ornaments

cannot overcome the darkness

in Jesus's home town,

for "God is under the rubble in Gaza"

as pastor Munther Isaac has said,

as our pastor says.

Signs reading *Happy New Year*

mix with *Stop Genocide*,

smells of New Year's fireworks

–with gunpowder smells in the shelled city,

rejoicing at the old year's end

–with sadness for the new one's beginning...

The same way the news from Gaza

mixes the death tolls

– in the announcer's voice

with the NBA and Champions League scores

– in the crawl on the screen.

Sadness for the losses

with joy for the wins.

Translated by Wayles Browne

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