

THE TIMES

a man
walking
purposefully
through Gold
Medal Park

while dozens
are sunbathing,
enjoying
new summer
warmth

he wears
a black hoodie,
carries
packing tape
& posters
in a floral
handbag

persistent,
screeching tape
at every
pole

keeping
his head
low

moving
quickly,
anxiously

I see
his poster:

May 17
Stop Trump's
Genocide
of Gaza

Defend
Protest

End
Ethnic
Cleansing

Free Khalil

onlookers—
some approving,
others curious,
one visibly
displeased

we cross
paths
but don't

meet eyes

I think
of the work
required
to fight
injustice-

small
acts
that
accumulate
into collective power

I make
my way
around,
and we
cross paths
again

meet
eyes-
and I wave

though
he looks
fearful
who's to say
I won't

accuse him
of terrorism?

of being
un-American—

despite being
perhaps the only
one truly
American
in the park?

I say,
“I appreciate
you.”

we bump
fists

he says,
“God bless.”

I don't believe
in God—

but I do believe
in humanity

our common
ground

more vital

than what
divides us

such are
the times
we live
in