

## ***A Call to Prayer***

*Al Salehi*

Echoing gunfire and screams  
saturate the horizon. Bodies, bugs, and blood  
blight the streets.

In the distance,  
a tug-of-war  
between Life and The After.

A little girl is pulled one way  
by her panicked mother, anchored in the other,  
still holding her father's lifeless hand.

In the city square,  
at the *strike* of dawn,  
an obscure sound —

the minaret's leaded bell  
takes a toll  
between rounds —

reminding us all,  
that now more than ever,  
it is time to pray.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Russian forces shelled a mosque in the center of Mariupol, Ukraine in March 2022. The building, modeled after an elegant Turkish mosque, had more than 80 citizens holed up in it as the Russian military bombed the area.