

I am taking the side of Peace.

Today I am taking sides.
I am taking the side of Peace.

Peace, which I will not abandon
even when its voice is drowned out
by hurt and hatred,
bitterness of loss,
cries of right and wrong.

I am taking the side of Peace
whose name has barely been spoken
in this winnerless war.

I will hold Peace in my arms,
and share my body's breath,
lest Peace be added
to the body count.

I will call for de-escalation
even when I want nothing more
than to get even.
I will do it
in the service of Peace.

I will make a clearing
in the overgrown
thicket of cause and effect
so Peace can breathe
for a minute
and reach for the sky.

I will do what I must
to save the life of Peace.
I will breathe through tears.
I will swallow pride.
I will bite my tongue.
I will offer love
without testing for deservingness.

So don't ask me to wave a flag today
unless it is the flag of Peace.
Don't ask me to sing an anthem
unless it is a song of Peace.
Don't ask me to take sides
unless it is the side of Peace.

Irwin Keller, Oct. 17, 2023

<https://www.irwinkeller.com/itzikswell/taking-sides>

