Refaat Alareer*

written by Steve Siegelbaum | February 9, 2026

*Key: D ©2025

audio: listen here

A teacher and a poet was Refaat Alareer

He taught his Gaza students that hope can conquer fear

What was he doing when bombs dropped from the sky

Writing his own epitaph: If I must die

These are the words—the good poet wrote

If I must die—let it bring back hope

A kite like an angel flying above

If I must die—let it bring back love

So welcome to the city where not a building stands

Yonder sat the poet, a poet's weapon in his hand

And welcome to the playground where the bullets fly

As children also pose the question: If I must die

These are the words—the good poet wrote

If I must die—let it bring back hope

A kite like an angel flying above

If I must die—let it bring back love

Walking through his family's ancient lemon grove

The fruit that's lying on the ground is ready to explode

Today there are no lemons for making lemonade

It’s only blood will flow—from a live hand grenade

These are the words—the good poet wrote

If I must die—let it bring back hope

A kite like an angel flying above

If I must die—let it bring back love

From deep beneath the Gaza sands to high above the clouds

The voices of the poets hang suspended like a shroud

As his students learned from Refaat the poems of Shakespeare

We will learn the hope and love of Refaat Alareer

These are the words—the good poet wrote

If I must die—let it bring back hope

A kite like an angel flying above

If I must die—let it bring back love

If I must die—let it bring back love