

# Handbook for the Gates of Death

I

After all that happened,  
you are a tourist;

You are outside  
looking in.

You regard the structure before you,  
regard the gates.

And you know you have a choice -

To pass willingly,  
to see the other side,  
to see what happened,  
to see what is inside and  
at the same time,

against all odds,  
survive.

II

Come, pilgrim, *listen*.

*See* - all is not dead among the graves.

Now is the time to ask the question:

why do I stand here?

Because if you stand here but do not know why

*you are not ready.*

### III

If you stand here because you know what  
happened here, but you still do not know why  
you stand here -

*you're not ready.*

If you stand here because you were brought  
here without explanation,  
without context,  
without warning,  
without support,  
without space for learning, or thinking,  
or mourning -

*you're not ready.*

If you stand here because *here* is  
a destination, a coordinate, a grid reference, a position on the earth -

*you're not ready.*

If you stand here because *here* is something  
to do, a place on your  
itinerary, a tick on your  
list;  
if *here* is another thing to consume in this region -

*you're not ready.*

If you stand here in the hope of taking photos or souvenirs;  
if you stand here in the hope that you will be titillated or entertained;  
if you stand here out of morbid curiosity;  
if *here* is a story for you to tell or a badge  
you can wear;  
if *here* is a place to scratch your name on the wall

*you're not ready.*

If you stand here distracted by your phone,  
or your screens,  
or your music;  
if you stand here impatient and distracted -  
*you're not ready.*

If you stand here with expectations of comfort,  
with an idea that you will be soothed,  
or shielded from the dark;

If you stand here because you hope to be uplifted  
by stories of regular people defeating their oppressors against  
all odds -  
*you're not ready.*

If you stand here to confirm your ideologies or ignorance -  
*you're not ready.*

If you stand here to fill your wallet, or empty it,  
*you're not ready.*

If you stand here unable to grasp the possibility that humanity is comprised  
of both light and  
shadow;  
if you seek to deny the darkness in its voice;  
if you seek to repress what you find with  
tales of heroism and triumph -  
*you're not ready.*

If you stand here to take the position that you are good  
or innocent,  
or incorruptible;  
if you are polarised and hold that  
morality is  
binary or non-existent;  
If you believe that you are not responsible for your actions or the  
consequences of the things you do;  
If you stand here in certainty of yourself  
and your behaviour,  
in certainty that there is an order in things,  
certain that you can fathom what lies before you,  
how it came to be,  
and who caused it and why -

*you are not ready.*

IV

If you are not ready for what you will receive - you are not ready.

And if you are not ready -

*Go home.*

V

This place has no purpose without your readiness.

If you are not ready  
for its lessons,  
if you are not ready  
for its wisdom,  
if you are not ready  
to listen, to act -

then  
you  
and  
those  
you  
love  
are  
*marked.*

VI

Heed the sign outside the gates of death -  
it reads:

FUNERAL IN PROGRESS  
*Here. Today. Forever. For all.*