Deborah Elliott Deutschman

Poetry in Another Year of War at the Beginning of the 21st Century

How do you meter/rhyme from the frontlines—
The woman whose son is shot right before her eyes
In the Middle East country where the war never ends
As the star-filled summer night sky revolves above
In what was the garden where he played as a child
Outside the rubble of ruins of their house
A scene with palm trees and artillery fire and bombs
And his mother kneels rocking nonstop moaning
Barely human the voice of an open wound moaning
From the open grave of the living an endless moan
Echoing on even in the silence that follows—
And we watch it online
Streaming live on the news—
Is this a-b-a-b or a-a-b-b?

How do you meter/rhyme life today
With a set of rules from another time
When we believed in our longing for order
And to compartmentalize would guide us along
And help us to survive?

Or in your own world-within-the-world— How do you meter/rhyme love? And years of days of a life together of happiness In the human reality of the relative That translates nevertheless into a happy life— How to convey any of that so fleeting and elusive Of what holds you together and keeps you afloat Above the fray and onslaught of random events With a scheme of words/colors/patterns
And vowels/syllables that conform
To some ancient hierarchy of higher forms?
Or the sudden loss
Of that whole life how do you meter/rhyme that?
And the wake of empty days and nights
Adrift in the cold countries of another realm
Where you navigate on somehow across the ice—
How do you convey in measured lines death?
Capture its aftermath beat of nothingness?

Here as meter/rhyme recedes
Along with the tides of time
How do we measure anything?
Today with its speed-of-light life
Where another reality could always explode
At any moment and obliterate everything
Everywhere right now all around us?