

## BRIEFLY NOTED

**REJA-E BUSAILAH.** *In the Land of My Birth: A Palestinian Boyhood.* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2017). Pp. 371. \$19.95 paper. ISBN 9780887280009.

In this book, Reja-e Busailah recounts his upbringing in Palestine at the time of its partition in 1947 following Britain's relinquishment of Palestine. Busailah has written a tripartite memoir in which he dives deep into his transitions from one school to the next as a blind boy, his battles with his relationship to religion, and the violent exodus of thousands of Palestinians from their cities and towns. He focuses on the natural beauties and peculiarities of Jerusalem, Hebron, and Lydda to demonstrate the extent to which he has explored his home country – as well as the confusing ways in which people have treated him for being blind. While many pity him, Busailah latches onto literature and uses the British colonial administration to receive cheap books in Braille and successfully finish his education. As a Muslim, he battles an internal conflict for a long time, questioning if faith would actually help him and others around him.

Learning to navigate current events, Busailah holds a constant reproach to the British, who humiliated and killed many Palestinians. Furthermore, he questions the true intentions of the United Nations as they allowed for partitioning to happen, before returning to provide aid to the thousands of people whom the partition turned into refugees. Although living in an unstable environment, Busailah also delves into the intimate connections between friends, classmates, relatives, and neighbors as he grasps onto the silver linings of his time in Palestine. To the chagrin of Palestine's oppressors, Busailah concludes with an homage to Palestine's perseverance and its ability to determine its fate, while also reminding readers of his people's cruel and mournful journey of removal, death, and oppression. ✂

DOI:[10.1017/rms.2021.17](https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2021.17)

Michelle Ramirez  
Claremont McKenna College