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From a Distance

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~~Not a Choice:~~

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Book

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Jane Ray, creator of such visionary books as **The Story of Creation** (Smarties Prize 1992) and **Noah's Ark**, has taken the rather bland words of Julie Gold's song and set them to a haunting sequence of paintings that depict a harmonious and beautiful world gradually infiltrated by images of hatred, violence and death. The opening pages depict richly textured and tranquil landscapes, reminiscent of Ray's earlier work. Then the reader's eye is drawn into the streets and homes of a thriving community. On the next page, one small detail shows a couple arguing, a tank is glimpsed in a back street, and helicopters have joined the doves and stars in the sky above the town. Then the community descends into a barbaric conflict which is followed by a sudden, unexplained redemption. This book was inspired by the war in Bosnia, and was created in order to promote the work of Connect Humanitarian Agency, a Bosnian charity which is striving to heal the wounds caused by the conflict. This is certainly a vivid and a powerful book, but the slightness of the text and the ambiguity of the picture story imply that some careful teacher intervention might be necessary in order to help younger children to understand what is intended to be an optimistic message.

Running Order:

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