

How we know the day is ending

The *athaan* goes off and the children run home. And we don't see them again until morning
The street lights come on. The windows are shut and the curtains are drawn
The staff vans bring the daddies home. The police vans park and wait
The road is still and the mummies get tomorrow's bread and milk

The daddies call the big brothers from the corners. And the other boys hide the dice
The small children eat on the couches. The big sisters wash the babies
The daddies smoke on the *stoeps*. The mummies dry the nappies
The road is still and the big brothers unchain the dogs

The daddies roll up the prayer mats. And the mummies iron tomorrow's clothes
The small children find their beds. The big sisters rock the babies
The house is quiet. The daddies lock the doors
The road is still and everyone goes to sleep

The whistling starts. And the *manne* stand in circles on the corners
The police vans start circling and the dogs start barking
The road is not still and we watch from the windows

- Lisa Julie