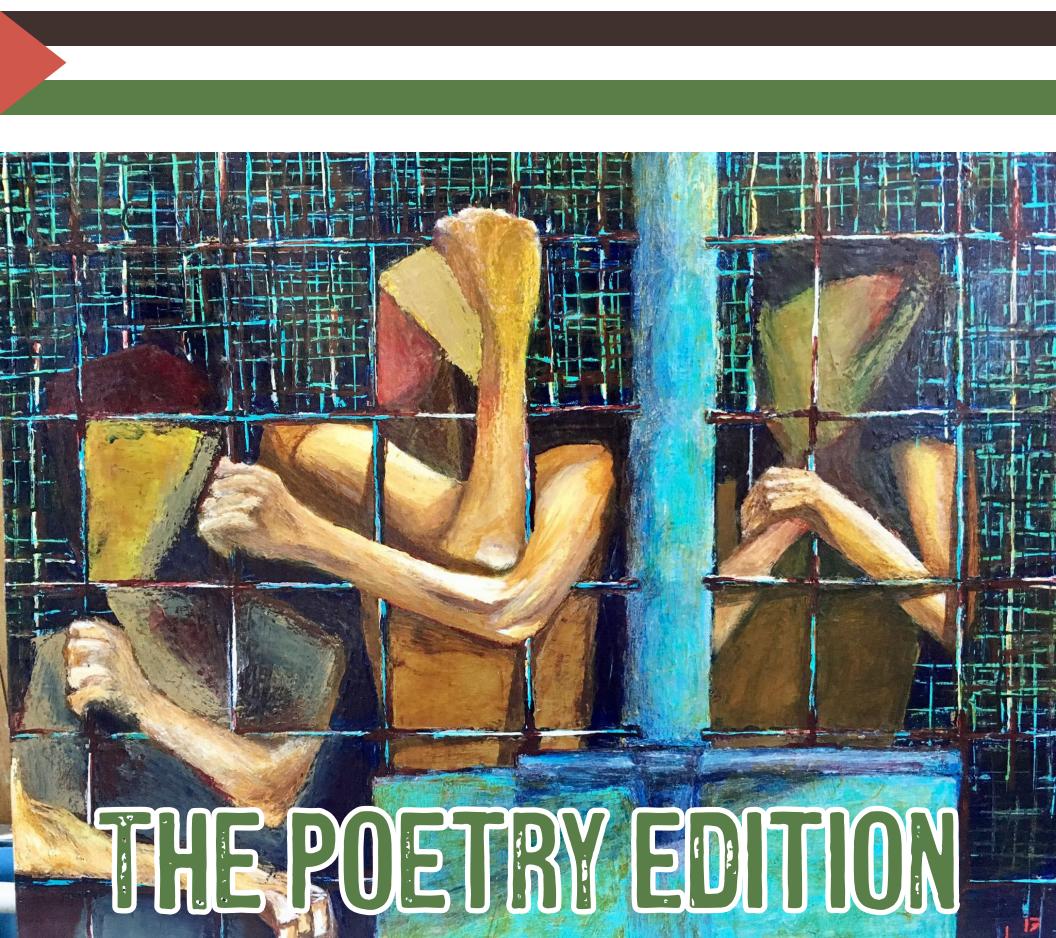




VOLUME VI

December 2024 //

WRITTEN REVOLUTION



THE POETRY EDITION



About Us

Written Revolution is a publication intended to allow the unempowered voices on campus to share their creative projects in a collective framework. Fundamentally, this publication platforms revolutionary thought on campus - we believe that writing and art are among the most powerful tools for conducting a revolution. We are aligned with the liberation of all oppressed peoples, with global indigenous rights movements, with people-oriented philosophies and practices, and with anti-capitalist sentiment. In particular, we hope to spotlight projects that engage with culture and community by producing radical shifts away from the hierarchical and individualistic.

We share essays, poems, sketches, cartoons, and many other forms of content in order to further the liberatory frame of mind. Written Revolution is open to those who support our cause, and our content submission is open to all MIT community members. We also summarize revolutionary actions and activities taken on campus to further the call to liberation, be it through student unions, grassroots movements and demonstrations, or large-scale organizing. We are here to encourage such collective action on our campus. We are the revolution, and we are writing our own history.

Get involved



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Instagram: @mitwrittenrevolution

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A graphic design for a Table of Contents. It features four main numbered sections: 1. Poetry of the Camps, 2. Collaborative Poetry, 3. Voices of Gaza, and 4. Free Poetry. The numbers are large red digits. The section names are in black text, some rotated diagonally. The background is white with a decorative border consisting of green vertical bars and grey curved lines forming a path-like pattern.

We now approach yet another semester of struggle at MIT.

In these past months, we have borne witness to the latest evolution of institutional repression, the same kind that echoes across many university campuses well outside of MIT's administrative prison walls. As student discipline becomes streamlined and the police-administration collaboration becomes codified in nighttime house raids and surveillance, we see increased policing of lawful and peaceful community activities like flyering, chalking, and tabling,

Every campus protest has been met with increased police violence and threats of arrest. Some protests have been met with arrests—largely on ethnic minorities and students of color.

We salute our comrades who take enormous risks, putting their bodies and voices on the line to campaign for justice and end the complicity of our institute. We at Written Revolution have also faced repression by the institute administration. Our fifth edition was banned from MIT in November and one of our editors was banned from stepping foot on campus. These drastic measures, which run contrary to MIT's commitment to free speech, were spurred by social media posts from campus zionists which doxxed our co-editor and spread libel. The administration followed their bias against pro-Palestine activism to ban our co-editor from campus without due process while ignoring the direct policy violations of these zionist agitators.

MIT uses words like

TERRORISM & CAMPUS SAFETY

to manufacture consent
for the suppression of
pro-Palestinian speech,

while the occupation's military tweets pictures of journalists or doctors and calls them "agents of Hamas" to manufacture consent for their targeted assassinations and the destruction of critical infrastructure in Gaza.

This is yet another reminder of our institution's colonial roots. We must dismantle such structures of power which have long abused the voices of justice.

In the thick of the semester—during the rush of the fight—it can be easy to forget what it is that we fight for. The stench of suppression can overwhelm our senses and plunge us into deeper and deeper cynicism, but we must always return to our guiding compass: the Palestinian struggle for liberation. Decolonization movements of the past have faced their own periods of doubt and hopelessness—but throughout the turbulence they have faced across decades, the flame of the Palestinian resistance has burned bright. We look to this for inspiration in continuing our fight in support of global liberation.

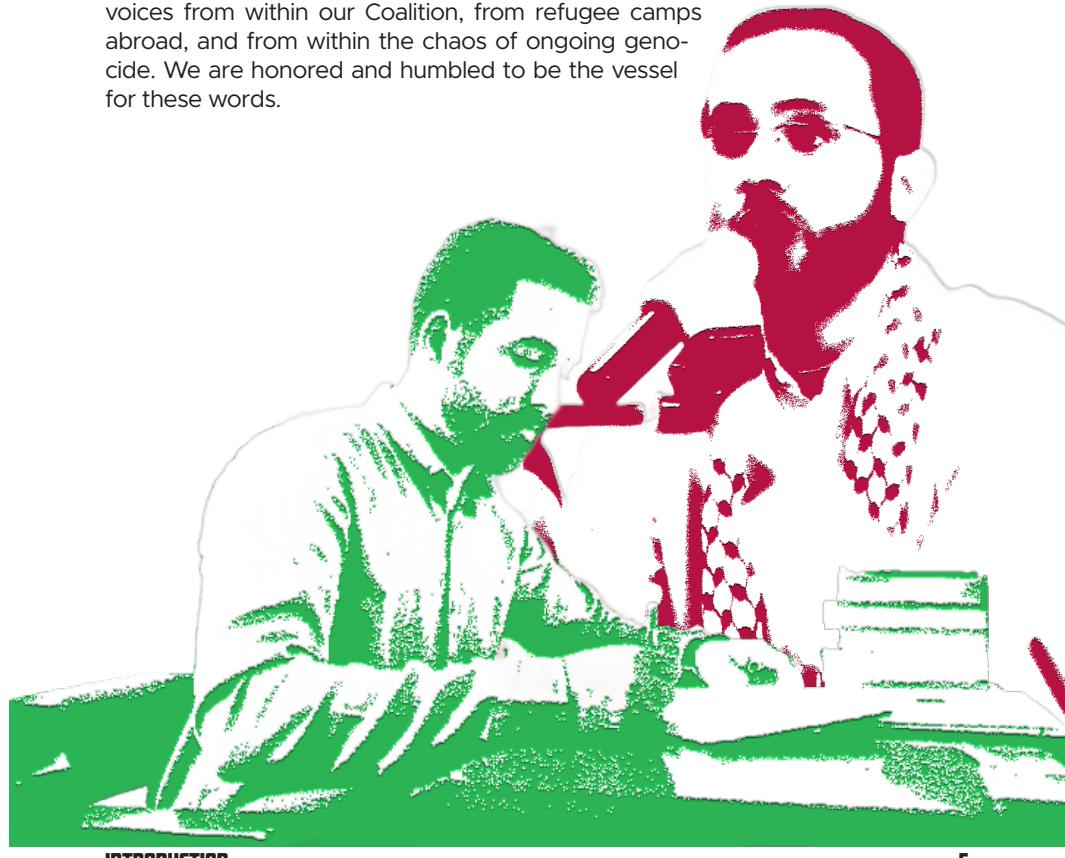
Poetry allows us to express the history and depth of this struggle. Poetry allows us to grapple with the emotional burden of this era of genocide and colonization worldwide while staying on the path of liberation. On December 6th, 2023, just over a year ago, the renowned Palestinian poet Refaat Alareer was assassinated by the occupation. His revolutionary stance toward the liberation of Palestine meshed with his beautiful understanding of literature as a potent vessel for struggle. In *Gaza Writes Back* (2013), he observed the essential connection between his homeland and its stories:

SOMETIMES A HOMELAND BECOMES A TALE. WE LOVE THE STORY BECAUSE IT IS ABOUT OUR HOMELAND AND WE LOVE OUR HOMELAND EVEN MORE BECAUSE OF THE STORY.

Mosab Abu Toha, a poet from Gaza who escaped the genocide, came to MIT to speak about his own experience of separation from his homeland and the harrowing experience of being kidnapped by the occupation and separated from his family. When he was asked about his sense of connection to his homeland of Palestine, he answered, "I feel connected to my homeland because it looks like me. Because the trees—they grow like me. The sea breeze—it smells like me."

Palestinian poets like Mosab Abu Toha and Refaat Alareer are among the truest voices in history; they join Sudanese poets like Emi Mahmoud, Congolese poets like Tchicaya U Tam'si, Caribbean poets like Aimé Cesaire, and the many other voices who rise up from under the weight of colonization to force the world to reckon with its depravity.

In this edition, we commit ourselves to remembering the fight and renewing our hope through poetry. We seek to honor the poets who have lent their voice to the struggle, both those who have been martyred along the path to liberation as well as those who continue to speak out. We uplift voices from within our Coalition, from refugee camps abroad, and from within the chaos of ongoing genocide. We are honored and humbled to be the vessel for these words.





MIT
ALUMNI
FOR PALESTINE



Asian American
Initiative



Arab Student
Organization



BLACK
GRADUATE
STUDENT
ASSOCIATION
MIT



Black Students
Union



Coalition Against
Apartheid



The Disability Justice
Collective @ MIT



MIT Divest



MIT DUSP
Students For
Palestinian
Liberation



Faculty & Staff
For Palestine

The MIT Coalition For Palestine (C4P) was founded in October 2023 in response to the escalation of the genocide against the Palestinians waged by the occupation forces. Today, the C4P includes 19 student, staff, and faculty groups aligned towards collective liberation for Palestine and all the globally oppressed.



Graduates For
Palestine



Indigenous Students
4 Justice



Jews For
Collective
Liberation



Latino Cultural
Center



Muslims For
Justice



Palestine@MIT



MIT Taara



Reading For
Revolution



Written Revolution

THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION



POETRY OF THE CAMPS

**SCIENTISTS
AGAINST
GENOCIDE
ENCAMPMENT**

**FOR
PALESTINE**

Poetry of the Camps is an initiative run by Illuminated Cities, She Is Night, and local partners to connect students in refugee camps with students in the US through poetry. This semester, Written Revolution joined this effort at MIT, holding four poetry events including a finale in Kresge Little Theater. We partnered with Illuminated Cities and She Is Night to connect students in the Coalition for Palestine at MIT and community members in Cambridge and Boston with Rohingya students in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, as well as displaced students from Gaza.

Through this program, students reflected on several key themes and wrote poems which we shared in an intimate poetry recital. The themes of the sessions were: Miracle Poems, Colorism, Homeland, Love Letters to Palestine, and finally, Freedom-Huriye-Azadi. Below is a description of "miracle poems" by Zehra Imam, cofounder of She Is The Night and Illuminated Cities, who had the vision for Poetry of the Camps.

A "miracle poem" is a poem in which you speak about yourself as a miracle. It can be hard to write poetry, even harder to imagine oneself as a miracle. Often we feel that seeing ourselves as miracles requires self-aggrandizement or narcissism. Sometimes the world is too horrifying to understand what a miracle truly is. But take inspiration from Maya Angelou's words to Tupac Shakur, when they met by chance one day: "When was the last time someone told you how important you are? Did you know people stood on auction blocks and were bought and sold so that you could stay alive today?"

Believing that you are a miracle, particularly in a context that prefers to see you dead or departed, means declaring your existence as integral and intentional. Believing you are a miracle comes with a sense of importance not rooted in ego or arrogance, but rather held by the certainty of Divine love in the face of violence.

What can a few words of poetry do? What can believing in miracles do for those who are the most broken-hearted because they have witnessed the continual desecration of their land and people? How can believing that you, yourself, are a miracle transform the world when the occupation counts on your obliteration? In these works of poetry, submitted by students in Rohingya refugee camps, students in Boston, and students in Palestine, know that someone else in a refugee camp or in another part of the world has dared to write a poem about their own conditions and dreams, imagining and affirming themselves as a miracle.

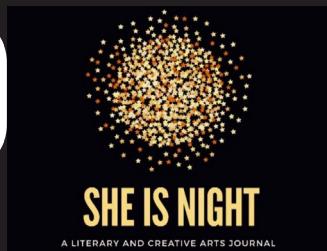
Something incredible and powerful begins to alchemize when a miracle poem is recited aloud, shared in the context of a community, and placed out into expansive arms of our world. It can bring each of us closer to freedom.

Our Partners

Illuminated Cities is an education organization that works with local communities impacted by systemic violence.



She Is Night is a creative arts collective for girls and women of color. We curate spaces that center female protagonists of color and redream a world beyond colorism.



SESSION ONE MIRACLE

POEMS

I'm Muhammad Jaber.
I'm a young Rohingya refugee.
I'm a youth walking through an endless journey.
I'm a student searching for light in the dark.
I'm the strength rising in my generation.

Jaber RC, Rohingya refugee camp

I'm the hope that keeps my people going
like a candle glowing in the midnight.
I'm a voice resonating in the silence of struggle.
I'm a flame burning in the cold winds of despair.
These hidden miracles inside me give me the courage
To fight for peace, to stand for freedom.
I am a miracle.

I am Khaleda,
A Rohingya girl,
Braver than most,
In a challenging world.

Fighter for the rights,
Strong and bright,
Reaching new heights,
A guiding light
For those in the night.

Helper for those,
Who needs it.
With every lesson,
My passion will grow,

I am a miracle.

Khaleda, Rohingya refugee camp

I'm Jaitun.
Who am I ?
I'm one of the Rohingya girls who tolerated persecution.
I'm a girl who walked 15 days continuously.
I'm a girl who faced the discrimination and genocide in my age of Eleven.
I'm a girl who is exploring peace not only in the world but also in nature.
I'm a girl who likes to seek justice from the entire world.
I'm a miracle.

Rohingya refugee camp

A Path Unseen

I am Mohammed Faisel,
a Rohingya hunger to rise,
Like a bird with two wings,
I dip into the skies.

Like a river caged,
I still seek the sea,
Books are my compass,
though no path sets me free.

Barriers emerge like shadows tall,
Hope glimmers, a candle,
as the system stalls.

Mohammed Faisel
Rohingya refugee camp

My roots are strong, from Arakan's soil,
A land lost, yet in my heart, I toil.
I climb, I fall, like a river run dry,
But the flame in me, never says goodbye.

Denied the chance to stretch my wings,
Still, I chase the stars on broken strings.
Against all chances, my spirit stays whole,
A Rohingya refugee youth, I am a miracle.

Umme Kulsum
Rohingya refugee camp

I am Umme Kulsum.
I am a survivor of genocide,
I am a dreamer of hope,
I am a waiter of patience,
I am a worker for peace,
And I am a seeker of justice.
I am a miracle.

Parves Mushorof
I'm a Rohingya
Staying in the cage,
Without shadow under the sky.

I'm a Rohingya
Dwelling with the dead body,
Without peace on the ground.

I'm a Rohingya
Surviving in the darkness,
Without lights in the universe.
I'm a miracle.

Md Aziz

I am a refugee, searching for peace,
I am a struggler, hoping for release.
I am the tears, that quietly fall,
I am the strength, to stand through it all.

I am the voice, that longs to be heard,
I am the heart, holding each word.
I am the fight, that never will end,
I am the hope, that refuses to bend.

I am a miracle, still here today,
I am the justice, that won't fade away.
I am Miracles.

Aj Rahman

I'm a Rohingya
Living far away from the homeland,
Without any future.

I'm a Rohingya
Like if I become a little happy,
Destiny gets upset.

I am a Rohingya
Who thinks every day
This is not the youth,
I dreamt of in my childhood.

I never thought of living,
I would be unable to bear the pain.
If I smile,
I should have to repay the debt of smiling.
If I smile sometimes,
It feels like I have a debt on my lips.

I'm a Rohingya
Who is always saying to life
I am not angry with you life,
I am just surprised.

I'm a failure of life
But I'm still a miracle.

Anowar Shah

I am a Rohingya
I stand in the camp, under an exotic sky,
But in my heart, my homeland will never die.
For though I am here, displaced and alone.
I am a Rohingya.

Building a life from broken lands.
Each day is a battle with hunger and fear,
But we hold our siblings ever near.
I am a Rohingya.
I am the future, I am the past,
I am the present, I will outlast.
I am Rohingya, and I am still here.
I am a miracle

Muhammad Roman

Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh

I am a Rohingya student
In this modern world,
I want to learn but,
Doors are closed for me.

I am a Rohingya student
I have no opportunity to reach my dreams,
I have no opportunity to reach my goals.

I am a Rohingya student
I hold my books and,
My heart still hopes.

I am a Rohingya student
I have no opportunity,
Without all my goals in my future.
I am a miracle.

Neyamot Ullah

I am Neyamot Ullah
I'm a refugee survivor beneath the open sky
I'm a hope and strength of my community

I'm a Rohingya youth,
I'm carrying the weight of responsibility to
liberate my people

I'm a community teacher,
I'm guiding the Rohingya children towards a
brighter future,
I'm the inspiration for the next generation,
I am a miracle.

Ibrahim

Assalamualaikum,
Name of Ibrahim

I am seeking forward to get
pleasant feeling as Mom's love
I am the crying of boyhood with
a lot of tear for reminding my
mom did in past, in future no
expect what becomes good

I am in a little cage to attach the
rope of dark in the beautiful and
bright of the whole world.

I don't know who I am.

— A Hopeless Youth —

Mohammad Ibrahim Reyas, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

I am a hopeless youth, there is no place to hold up my name and survive independently anywhere as a Human.

I am a hopeless youth who has no own home, homeland and independence, as a physically and mentally damaged bird by a very dangerous thunderstorm.

I'm Mohammed Reyas,
I'm a Rohingya student from the world largest refugee camp in Bangladesh,
waking each morning with hope for a peaceful life.

I'm dreaming every day that when the sun rises,
my life will be full of joy,
but at night, I hold sadness, worry, and fear in my hands.

I'm struggling each day, Though I hold onto the light,
for even in darkness, hope can shine bright.

I'm hoping that one day I will return home,
I believe dreams can come true.
I'm a miracle.

My life is as a broken-hearted, winged and legged bird.

I am a hopeless youth like a fallen rose in the park, where everyone comes to see flowers and they walk on me without sense.

Alas, I am a hopeless youth full of dreams, but the dreams are being snatched.

Allah I am a miracle.
Allah I am a miracle.

Rin Desikan

I am waiting for a miracle
I'm twelve years old and I stare into the skies,
praying to a god I don't believe in
to take me far away.

Anywhere,
I think,

is better than here.

I'm a wide-eyed innocent little thing,
A dreamer,

I live within the pages of fantasy books,
I wish for magic to save me.

I am seventeen years old,
and I am still waiting,
waiting,
waiting for a miracle.

I pull my legs into my chest,
a small quivering thing,

I know no one is coming to save me.

*I don't dare hope,
I don't pray,
but I am still waiting,
miracle indeed*

*If anyone can hear me
over my own cries.*

I am twenty-one years old

*and I am still a dreamer,
too naive they say,
and if faith is naivete,
I will never grow up.*

*I am still waiting for a miracle,
but instead of dreaming,*

*I scheme,
instead of wishing,
I create.*

I am strong, I am brave,
I am worn, I am beaten down,
I am
I am
I am

I am a Tamil woman forever tied
to the fighting spirit of my homeland,

I am forever sick,

forever sad,

forever grieving,

and I will forever fight

for the miracle we need.

I am still waiting for a miracle,

but the miracle is me:

I am a miracle.

Asmaa, Deir Al-Balah

Like a butterfly flying,
escaping the shadows of death
Towards the suns of freedom
Spider webs surround me
So I ascend with my delicate wings
To my last breath
Trying to reach
The light at the end of the tunnel
I am Asmaa, the miracle of the sky
A miracle for me and my people
And my city that captures my soul
Every day with its misfortune

Basman

I am the pain in the ass
Who asks too many questions.
I am a poet who is tiring his mentor,
Who wrote an ode to his bladder at the border
Instead of crying,
Who wrote an ode to the annoying drones.
I am the survivor who doesn't survive.
I am thirty-five years old, four wars, and a genocide.
I am a Palestinian who should have died years ago.
I am a miracle.

Palestinian displaced in Cairo

Doha Hassan

I'm a miracle
No
I'm an owl, I stay awake at night,
I enjoy the quietness of an airstrike.
I'm a miracle
No
I'm an old nomad
I love to evacuate every week or so
To where
To the unknown
I'm a miracle
No
I'm a socialite
I love being imprisoned with forty or fifty people,
Use the same restroom
Have the same canned food.
I'm a miracle
No
I'm an ignorant
By choice left school
To the school of animosity
To learn the mercy from the unmerciful
To learn love from haters
I'm a miracle
No, I'm a liar
I'm a victim
No, I'm a dreamer
And 'cause I'm Gazan.
I am a miracle.

Al Mawasi-Khan Yunis

Hend AlNusuirat Camp

I'm Hend,
A daughter of sun and moon,
A granddaughter of a golden name,
A lifeline who still holds the flame,
A genocide witness,
Still wanting to love, live, and flee.
Survived death many times,
Still chase dreams tirelessly,
Trace to be entirely free,
Pave the future that I aim to be.
Yet, I'm twenty,
In times of adversity,
I rise,
A miracle, united by atrocity

SESSION TWO WHAT IS COLORISM?

Wait for the Darkness

Wait for the darkness
to breathe sweet relief
and exhale
mingling with the magic of the void.
Travel under the dream-stars
whose message evades the Sun.
Rejoice
when the pregnant clouds
darken the horizon;
for these are the angels
who will pour life
into the stone.

Prahlad Lyengar

Even though we are more than
fifty shades of colors.
My community too, black and white.
I am neither European nor American.
I am the less civilized, no black man in my uncivilized world
would be choked under the knee of a white cop.

Black & White | Basman *Palestinian displaced in Cairo*

Yet no black man marries a white woman without
whispers in the wedding hall.
No black boy grows without questioning
his skin as if it was a mistake.
In my community, God is for all but still,
Whiter is the prettiest.

Zeno
The Blackest Miracle
I'm the Blackest miracle
From the Blackest of nights
I'm what you see when you close your eyes
I'm what you breathe when you open wide
I'm the one you miss when you let out loud sighs
I'm the one you kiss when I'm rubbing your thighs
I blacken your nights so you see the stars in the skies
Before time there was me
Planting Black seeds across your timeline
In Black DNA lay the seeds to your life
In the Blackest of caves I created your fire
I'm the Blackest of kings, hair of wool like Messiah
Peace be upon me, Black blessed since a child
I am the Blackest miracle
Wow.



POETRY OF THE CAMPS

THE WEIGHT OF MY SKIN, THE POWER OF MY NAME

Hibah Nour

From the age of six,
I knew my Blackness,
My Arabness,
Like a shadow that followed me.
From the first to third grade, I
stood alone,
The only Black child,
The only person of color in a sea
of pale faces
In a small school in Epsom, New
Hampshire.

It was not long after Rodney
King's blood was spilled on live
TV,
His body broken by the cruel
hands of LA police,
I began to question my place in
the world,
Asking my mother with innocent
desperation,
"Why didn't Allah give me yellow
hair?"

I was young,
My words a translation of what
I saw.
"Why didn't he make me beau-
tiful with blue eyes and blonde
straight hair?
Why are the white girls pretty
and I ugly?"

What those questions must have
done to her heart,
The saint of a woman I could
never hope to become,
Not in a hundred lifetimes.
But she fought with fury of
love,
Clawing away through every
obstacle,
So I wouldn't have to feel the
weight of my skin
As a curse.

The very next year my parents
moved mountains,
They broke their backs to lift us,
Sending me and my sister to pri-
vate Islamic school in Northboro,
Massachusetts.

And what a sacrifice it was -
Day after day for three long
years they drove us from Man-
chester to Northboro, Massachu-
setts.

Nearly twenty hours of driving
each week.
That's over three thousand, six
hundred hours,
Almost eleven thousand miles of
hours driving per year.
They wore themselves so thin
that we could feel whole,
So we could walk through the
world
Without shame,
Without fearing the reflection of
our Blackness
Or the weight of our Muslimness,
So we could belong,
If only for a moment.
My parents gave everything they
had
Sweat
Time

Their very bones.
And now all I crave is to return to
the land they left behind,
The motherland they fled so that
I might have a better life.
And yet somehow in the heart of
this longing,
I know if I return,

If I succeed in this dream,
I would make them prouder than
they have ever been.

Perhaps this is the part of my
destiny after all -
I am their firstborn, and my name
means
Gift from Allah.
A miracle.

A force of nature,
I am an angry Black Arab woman
But I will never be the harem
fantasy in your mind.

I will never bow my head and say
Yes, master
No, master
Please treat me with dignity and
respect, master,
No.

I am my father's daughter,
I will never back down.
I am my mother's daughter,
Worth more than an army of a
million men.
I am a miracle.

POETRY OF THE CAMPS

A COLORFUL WORLD

I saw a colorful world
A more beautiful world
In it is black and white
Red and yellow and brown
Another world
Luxurious
Everyone holds each other's hand
No difference between a white angel
Or a black angel
Or what's in between
The beauty of character brought their hearts together
Nothing prevails except what they have
I saw a blooming world
A world with all colors
No one dominates another
All are equal
They share
The same land
The same bright sun
The round moon
The blood in the veins
The heartbeats
The pains and aches
Nothing separates them
No color or race
Like one body

Deir Al-Balah



—A White Dress Aaliya Hussain—

A white dress for the mourning
Of 200,000 dead.
Eyelets down the collar,
Flounces down the legs.
Thin, clean,
pure victimhood,
Clashing with the hints of peachy brown.

A white dress for the shroud
Denied to Gaza's dead.
Like the scorching sun of noon,
A spectacle that cannot blind.
Red, red blood
Spilled down the skirts,
Would not be missed

A white dress for the graves
Of Al-Shifa and Deir Yassin.
Another girl, prettier than me,
Corporeal as safety in genocide
Never wore the dress
Never stained the dress
With complicity.

A white dress for the death
of Gaza's little kids.
Martyrs who are art
Red on white,
Blood on lace,
Innocence on brown.
Resistance?

SESSION THREE HOMELAND

What is Homeland? Basman

Palestinian displaced in Cairo

I wonder if God let me choose,
Which places I would want to be from.

I might choose to be Brazilian.
I am not sexy but I would love to learn Samba.

I might choose to be Italian.
I could eat pasta and pizza every day.

I might choose to be French.
I am overweight yet fashionable.

I might choose to be Swiss.
Nature, chocolate, and cheese are irresistible.

I could list many places based on
Food, music, dance and weather.

Palestine is on my list.
I put two lines under her name.

An angle in the corner laughing,
Why would you choose a place filled with
blood and death?

I didn't ask him, have you tried Maklouba?
I don't ask him about Dabka.

I don't tell him how much of an olive oil's lover
I am.

I don't tell him about Gaza's sea.
I don't speak about my friends.
I don't speak about the weather.

I just answer: no, I don't want to die.
Palestine always gives a better explanation to
my existence.

Isa Liggans

My homeland starts at night.
The horns have gone off,
The streetlights have gone on,
The air is crisp,
And somehow smells faintly of fried chicken,
and always barbecue that has somehow only
happened seasonally.
Or maybe the air is hot and sticky,
Moist heat trapped by the sweating streets in
the summer,
Bikes and ice cream cones up the street.
My homeland is asleep,
My PB&J was consumed
Curling my toes in warm silence under the
yellow kitchen lamp,
Quiet
As I stretch into the chair and it crackles
behind me.
The curtains are closed,
The forest is dark and silent,
Thick, scary,
But beautiful.
My homeland is midnight blue and warm
yellow.
My homeland starts in the morning,
A corner that nobody knows,
The pink sky blasts open to the rising sun,
A loud weekend,
A tired morning,
A crazy day,
My homeland is awake.

Aaliya Hussain

When you are mixed blooded,
Born in a stolen land
Soaked in the blood of genocide,
Born from glory from two other lands
At once fragrant, celebrated, beautiful,
Auspicious red and gold,
At once fragmented, forcibly displaced,
Dispossessed and colonized,
You do not belong on the land that was
stolen
By the entity that claims you,
Documents you,
Fingerprints you,
Nor is the land yours;
You only love it in
Hazy half-memories
Of gold and water and lavender and grass,
Of smoky air and fallen pine,
Always your past,
forever your future,
Home is what compels you.

Rin Desikan

What do you know of my Tamil Nadu?

What do you know of my Tamil Nadu?
What do I know of my own Tamil Nadu?
I have stories of my parents' summers with their maamis running along the beach climbing mammarams swimming in rivers eating fresh, warm rasam and sambar telling their own stories of their maamis.

I have stories and I have my summer
I have three days at a time
I have three days of home coming
of being bussed from relative to relative
and cherishing the moments I spend in between.

I do not have much.

My grandparents left too power-hungry to stay in the land
That gave them their being
This land that is etched into my heart
I have so few pieces of.

What do I know of my Tamil Nadu?
I do not know the land but I know the language
I know the feeling of being the only Tamil speaker
at a "South Asian" gathering.

I know the way my tongue curls around words

liquid and loud and melodious
I know the way my mouth shapes the "zh",
"Thamizh ku zh azhaghu".
I know the blank stares I get the laughs
the "are you sure you're Indian"
"your accent seems white-washed"

I know the yearning for the land better than the land itself.
What do I know of my Tamil Nadu?
I know we resist.

"A Tamil woman slaps a man who looks at him wrong," my mom tells me.
I know that.

I know we have fought language nationalization clinging onto our precious Tamil like it is gold
It is more valuable than gold.

I know the land has fought casteism
my grandparents didn't like that

And though the land has given me everything
my existence is built on violence
against the land

I have a duty to the land that gave me my being
to destroy everything oppressing its real stewards
to destroy the supremacy my power-mongering ancestors have wrongfully claimed over the land.

They betray the land to hold onto power.
The land will not forgive them.
Indha nadu is one of resistance.
And we will listen to the land and its stewards and heed its call of resistance.

What do YOU know of my Tamil Nadu?
Dirty commies, you call us.
Traitors to the Hindu religion.
Freaks.
Militants.
Dirty language.
Dirty.

As if my Tamil Nadu could ever be pinned down by a single word.

As if my Tamil Nadu belongs to a political party
Just talk to any woman
It doesn't and it isn't
Those rapists don't define us
We will keep slapping men forever.

As if the spirit of Tamil Nadu can be compartmentalized boxed away eradicated.

You will never comprehend how deep the roots of resistance of defiance of independence our language and our traditions go.

Thamizh Nadu Vaazhga.



I Don't Want to Die Basman

Palestinian displaced in Cairo

I wonder if God let me choose,
Which places I would want to be from.

I might choose to be Brazilian.
I am not sexy but I would love to learn Samba.

I might choose to be Italian.
I could eat pasta and pizza every day.

I might choose to be French.
I am overweight yet fashionable.

I might choose to be Swiss.
Nature, chocolate, and cheese are irresistible.

I could list many places based on
Food, music, dance and weather.

Palestine is on my list.
I put two lines under her name.

An angle in the corner laughing,
Why would you choose a place filled with
blood and death?

I didn't ask him, have you tried Maklouba?
I don't ask him about Dabka.

I don't tell him how much of an olive oil's lover
I am.

I don't tell him about Gaza's sea.
I don't speak about my friends.
I don't speak about the weather.

I just answer: no, I don't want to die.
Palestine always gives a better explanation to
my existence.



To My Toxic Lover, To My Homeland

Doha Hassan

Al Mawasi-Khan Yunis

To my Gaza, to my Jerusalem- all Jerusalem.
I will not say east nor west.
I will not tear you apart the way they did.

Here's a love letter to my torture:
Dear Palestine, all Palestine,
From the river to the sea.

Your daughter I am , don't be my stepmother.

Timid I am before you losses,
Unyielding because of your strength.

Out of place without you,
Devoid from all graces but you.

Your bloody days, your blown up hearts,
Your overriding sensation
Drew my moves, healed my wounds,
Strengthened my soul.

Your vigours sea waves,
Resonating in my mind,
Nostalgia all I feel
Memories all I trace

May I see your glory, freedom and unity.

Letter to my Homeland

Asnaa, Deir Al-Balah

Dear homeland,
I speak to you from the spirit of my displacement,
about my longing for every corner
of the city I love, and my many attempts to
return after the occupation prevented it, the
obstacles it placed, and the threats of no
return.

Isn't it unfair that I live in a country other than
your embrace?

However, my faith and the hope that you
planted in me since childhood remain as long
as olives and thyme remain.

I have repeatedly tried to rearrange my
papers to comprehend the woes of war that
accompany you, my homeland, and I could
not. My only consolation is that the things that
are happening now are not by my will, and my
options have become limited like any other
person who will meet his death in this war, but
your love for my homeland is engraved and
will remain immortal.

Your love, Asmaa

SESSION FIVE

FREEDOM /

HURIYE

ON THE FIRST DAY OF FREEDOM

Basman, Palestinian displaced in Cairo

On the first day of freedom,
I would visit Beersheba,
standing at the step of my old house
and crying.

I would eat konafa from Nablus,
walking in its old alleys.
At the back of my head,
fighting the flashbacks of the checkpoints.

I would leave the picture of the old city
of Jerusalem at the gravestones of my friends,
swallowing the wish this trip was supposed
to be a group trip.

I would hold the Palestinian flag,
running in the streets of Gaza
before opening my eyes and
remember my legs are amputated.

A Dream Doha Hassan

Al Mawasi-Khan Yunis

I had a dream
I went back home
Slept on my bed
Felt warmth again
I had a dream
I went to college
Nagged all day
How hectic it was
I had a dream
I wanted to live
I had a dream
I had my favourite meal
I had a dream

My ear forgot the war's sounds
shouting, bombardment, mothers sobs and
lose

I had a dream
My eyes forgot the blood, the loss, the
patience

Obligatory patience
My nose forgot the smoke smell, the deaths,
the corpse rotten

My hands stopped shivering
My body skipped what lived

I had a dream
Not panicking
Not imagining death

Joy Asmaa

Deir Al-Balah

A hail of joyful, luminous cars
Trucks and wagons loaded with joy set off
to return
Each to its place
You hear the ululations
The ululations of return and salvation
The ululations of hope and salvation
You see the flags everywhere
Raised and flying
You see hope in the eyes burning
On the first day of freedom
I taste the meaning of joy



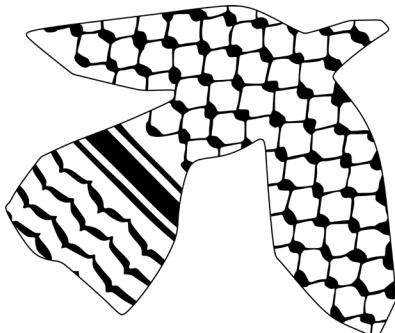
Fly Free

Hend, AlNusirat Camp

As a bird feathered by blood
Dreams of skies,
Yearns to fly,
Soar high,
Break the chain,
Wipe away the wallowing pain

Shout out:
I'm alive,
I'm free,
I cry...

Heavy it is to be free,
And it is not easy to be.
Scars still hurt,
Agony still beats,
Grief still feeds on my heart.
Memories erode my mind.
Why was my beloved killed without remorse?

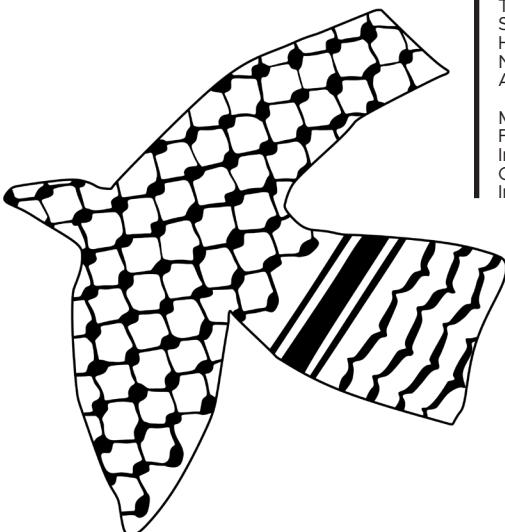


I couldn't fly,
Nor escape the sly,
Nor snatch my grandmother as she died.
I couldn't resuscitate,
Nor mitigate
What she felt
Before being killed,
Or even hold her hands to whisper:
"Don't fear, I'm here."
I keep asking why,
Why wasn't I killed
Instead?

Heavy is being free;
It doesn't matter anymore to flee.

What a curse!
Is it a grace
To be free with clipped wings,
Drenched in bloodbaths,
Tarnished by death,
Squashed by hunger,
Haunted by horror,
Nightmares,
And echoes of farewell screams?

Maybe, I still want to be
FREE
In life,
Or like a bird,
In heaven.



Nicola Lawford

HOW TO MAKE PEACE (THE DOFASCO DRAG QUEEN)

Dream the nightshift Dofasco drag queen dream
her collecting pieces from the Beach Road scrapyard under Nikola Tesla Blvd making a stainless dress for her red glow casting blast furnace to mold to westward train to be made into things: steel rebar houses steel pots steel-toed
boots worn by Raylynn with her welding shield kissing you New Years Eve eternal flare stacks dimmer under firecrack colors over the harbor before the Arcelor purchase. Engineers claim no politic here though they are descended from the forefathers of steam engine efficiency making them believe there is only one optimal way to make steel or power or peace in the face of terror impartial steel-toed peace keeping boots on the ground in Haiti and Iraq as the delegate vetoes and Palestine observes beside the Holy See and we do not accept passports from Taiwan while staff laugh it off in Brooklyn comedy clubs and let sleeping delegates lie in a midtown corner office terror can be defined as claiming politics through violence against the masses you read Omelas in law class and Harvard lawyers said they would be the ones who walk away. Do not say terror is distinct from steel engineers or delegates or peace keeping steel rockets on the plane eastward to make things into steel: rebar house steel pot steel boot-toe steel and feel yourself a perverse drag queen wearing pieces of things chemicals in your hair that will fall out in clumps once the nurse comes to drain your tarnished lungs in thirty years even though you never lived in the East End so please like the Dofasco drag queen don your clinking steel-dull alloy curls and walk from rowed rolls to delegates' desktops dented by a bullet point sharp stiletto catwalk Arabic Chinese English French Russian and Spanish translators speechless in suspended squares of glass please kiss Raylynn and her steel-toed boots before you bow collect your money with your scraps and smile.



THE DAY OF THE DEAD

I dreamed I gave birth to a small green praying mantis. It was too small to breastfeed. It was green like young strawberries and I thought it would die. It was the day of the dead. Javier had an altar in the office with Cola for his tía. Valeria wore drag makeup to mix paint at Benjamin Moore Paint Store. Mosab drove in wearing a rose, he spoke of strawberries and showed us the Beit Lahia orange night on home video, and he spoke of warzone weddings, of birthdays, of human flesh in the mouths of two cats. Our cat Charlie gave birth to twins. The runt was a girl and she was small like a sock. Sock in the mouth of a human girl in the Sean Baker film we went to on the subway. Subway strawberry red in the mouth of the Davis tunnel. Steel rails in the mouths of the sparkling steel subway wheels. He said when they make us make steel they are trying to remove our humanity too and before my baby was a praying mantis she was a human girl. I immersed her in milk. They try to remove our humanity and still we make steel and make children and mix paint and perform drag and make films and drive trains and dig tunnels and keep cats and marry lovers and wear the colors of pubescent strawberries and leave Cola on the altar on the day of the dead.



COLLABORATIVE POETRY

15
SECONDS

The illustration features a large orange circle divided into four quadrants by a thick black curved arrow pointing clockwise. Inside the circle, there are approximately 15 dark red, oval-shaped objects resembling pens or markers scattered around. In the center of the circle is a large, stylized grey number '15' with a white outline. To the left of the '15' is the word 'SECONDS' in a bold, dark red sans-serif font. To the right of the '15' is the word 'POETRY' in a bold, black sans-serif font. Above the '15' is the word 'COLLABORATIVE' in a bold, black sans-serif font.

2

During the Scientists Against Genocide Encampment, a dear community member named Austin Cole led us in a beautiful exercise during one of the many cold nights. He passed out several pieces of paper and several pens to people sitting in a circle. The rules of the game were simple: we would be given 15 seconds to write a single line in a collaborative poem. At the end of the 15 seconds, we would pass our papers clockwise and begin anew, this time adding onto the previous line provided by our comrade before us. And so on, until we returned to our original paper with a completed poem. The result was surprisingly marvelous: each poem had its own character, its own flavor, but the mixing of ideas could be heard equally throughout. Some poems developed repetition very early on; some started with bold messages and imagery; others started with questions and ended with answers. They were all unique, and they were all collective – it was a beautiful exercise in creating as a community, replacing individualism with collectivism at all levels.

During one of our events this semester, we repeated this exercise with our attendees, and came up with more collective poetry. These poems are reproduced in the following pages; notice how each is composed of various handwriting, varied cadence, and subtly different tones, but they all contribute to a collective vision. We hope that you try this experiment with your friends as well!

#1

Cowardice is a choice
it should never be the default

ignorance is a decision
it should never be the default

compassion is a duty
it should always be the default
staying silent is not an option
speak up and speak out
you are the voice of the voiceless
countless of the exist

let my tongue be
your trigger and
my words declare
the dead

#2

I am so inspired by those crowd me
they blossom and grow even without sunlight
shining through the deepest caverns
life grows even in dark cracks
in the deepest cages where no
sunlight creeps in
similar to the hole that has been carved
in my chest
the empty space fills as I am surrounded by
the crowd
life finds its way again out
of death by nature's design
can I be a grain
on the beaches
or a leaf among all these trees

#3

The wings of morning spread wide
She flies over her broken home
Above the grass & trees & soil
under the sea, stones, and sand
There is always the land
she stands right there
protecting us all
she is the mother of all beginnings
The ~~blood~~ barrel gives life
when will it rest.
tirelessly maintaining life
giving her all to us
who is she? the one who represents
everything and nothing?

#4

I can't believe we wake up everyday
to the sound of yet another
bomb ~~woman~~ another crying
mother
another crying child
another crying city
another crying world, crying for someone to listen
another crying angel, on whose face tears glisten
the sky cries, but even its tears are
toxic
They burn our skin that looks for
a gentler touch
we exist in the face of suffering and
death and they expect us to sing?

#5

The earth shakes
so does my heart
one faster than
the other
this is insane.

Which is faster?

I can't be sure, but now my heart
shakes too

Or maybe my body shivers,
while my heart is still
These chains shake

They rattle, & they break
and the metal the wrists they are
on ache

Can you imagine what happens
next?

#6

What does it mean to be angry?
Is it a feeling? A fact? A being?
Am I anger? or angry?
Is it supposed to be contained?
can I pass it on to the next person?
Feelings are overwhelming. Do I even want to
feel?
"How to go mad without losing
my mind" I ask and repeat

I want it all dead
so that I maybe able
to think
to feel
to be in community is the only way to heal

#7

To be or not to be, going home or
staying here

Where is home? What defines home?

Home is where everything is quite
and green

Home is place time and everyone

Home is everywhere but nowhere
at once

Home is with those I surround myself with

Home is the place where I am meant to
be at the end of the day

Home is the place I am meant to create
at the beginning of every day

Home is somewhere I can't see, but I
feel it within me

Home is a feeling. It is safety
& it is love.

#8

My heart bleeds into this soil

I wonder, will it give life to the trees?
At least the trees give me life, although
we chop them down

The leaves tell their own stories

But the sound is cut short
and no one heard them
I want the end to
be told & never

let's be seeds

We will grow and flourish and

become flowers even without rain or sun
to give fruit to the bees and birds who
pay us kind visits



VOICES OF GAZA

3

This section features the powerful words of poets with whom we in Written Revolution have had the honor of interacting. The first two poems were recited by Mosab Abu Toha during his visit to MIT, from his new book of poetry "Forest of Noise." We encourage readers to purchase the collection and support Mosab Abu Toha's writing.

The remaining poems were written by a poet in Gaza, Ahmed Sarsour, who connected with us through social media. This is his family's story:

We are the Sarsour Family (Hamid, Nefouz, Ahmed and Belal) from Palestine and over the past 10 months our family has endured through two wars: Sudan and Gaza. Like many Palestinians in exile, we spent the last years in Khartoum, Sudan where we were able to build a life. Unfortunately, in May 2023 we were forced to flee Sudan as a result of the war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

We left behind all our belongings and spent our savings to be able to flee Sudan and move back to Gaza, only to be caught up in armed conflict once again. Both conflicts have been recognised as the most challenging humanitarian catastrophes of our time, so we are definitely lucky to be alive (Alhamdulillah!). The trauma and pain of our family has endured these past 10 months has been unimaginable.

Both of our parents, Hamid and Nefouz are elderly and in urgent need of consistent medical treatment and cannot walk long distances. Our father, Hamid, cannot handle physical activities for too long, therefore a long walk for evacuation is impossible for him as we do not own a car. He had an accident in which bones from his legs were cut, which is why he is in constant need of painkillers and care, something not available in Gaza right now. Our mother, Nefouz, suffers from early stages of diabetes and currently faces an UTI that needs urgent medical care and attention to avoid worsening.

As a result of the war in Sudan we also lost our jobs (Ahmed and Belal) as engineers and project managers. And the possibilities for job hunting in Gaza is non-existent, and were extremely difficult even before the conflict broke out in October. It is because of these unfortunate events, our family is seeking to evacuate Gaza as soon as possible, as the situation is turning more dire and difficult by the hour, especially for our parents. We may not survive if we stay as our neighbourhoods have been bombed and continue to be victims of exchanges of fire and attacks.

Please consider donating to Ahmed's family's GoFundMe, and reflect on his story as you read his poetry in the next pages.



Instagram



GoFundMe

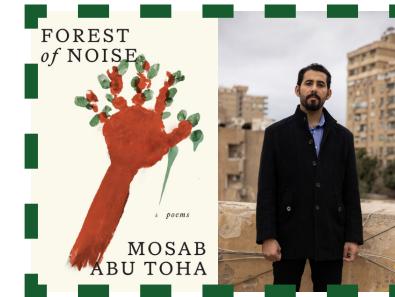
MOSAB ABU TOHA



VOICES OF GAZA

Forest of Noise

A car slides on our asphalt street,
Like an iron running on an ironing board.
But in my city, streets are never flat.
Potholes from bombs are everywhere,
Like crows' nests in a forest of noise.



Two Watches

He's wearing two watches,
one set to the local time in New York,
the other to Gaza's.

In a café with friends,
waiting for his tea at the round green table,
whenever his eyes fall
on the Gaza dial, he remembers the kids
of his neighborhood running in the alleys,
girls playing hopscotch, boys playing soccer.

At night, when the light in the Gaza watch doesn't work,
he knows electricity is off in his neighborhood.

If the metal case grows warm,
he knows bombs have started to fall.

If the watch doesn't move, he knows
a relative, a neighbor, a friend, has died.
When that happens, the watch won't work again
until their body is buried.

But what if there is no body anymore?

He is happy to have time, a watch that works.
He is happy to have time.

AHMED

SARSOUR



VOICES OF GAZA

Staying Silent?!

Yes, you stayed silent too!
I heard the echo of it in the bombs they
dropped on a child of two!
Indeed, you said you didn't want to be a
part of this,
but they heard your silence and tore apart
homes too!
You can walk and see limbs and bodies all
over the streets.
Please look away as they continue to ethnically
cleanse these scenes.
They take some to their skin bank others to
bury in dust, rubble, and sand!

You know by heart that Gaza is free,
but you chose to believe what they've recited
over the years.
How unjustly they've been treated,
the Holocaust they survived.
They have every right to defend themselves
from apartheid!
But as they do, they reflect it on us. How
can you be so blind?

Are you going to stay silent too?
As they kill more people far away from you?
You said you will fight for all human rights
but it seems you do not care about my
people's rights.
Ahmed Hamid

So if you may, just turn your eyes away,
I know you have paid for this genocide to
be on play.

We don't need your help,
We don't need your slogans.
We will fight ourselves, spread the horrors
unspoken.

So keep on staying silent, keep on paying
them taxes, We won't surrender until we
are done,
So run, run, run.
They are coming for your contradictions
and your gun.

You will witness it with your eyes, they will
pay the price!
Once they are done, you will all be left with
none!

No Head!

If you did see it, you can't have it unseen!
Palestinian children's lives don't matter.
The baby had a diaper on but no head! Let
that sink in as you watch from behind your
screen!

How many times did you watch us getting
burned? Watch us scream! Have you heard
our shouts? Have you cared enough to
scream?

To scream No!
to all of those who suppress us, To those
who kept us in between! Stuck on city
borders, waiting, using hashtags, getting on
your daily stream!

They tormented us, tortured us,
and as they stated, unalive 35 thousand of
us, that fascist regime!
The baby was pulled out of a sea of burning
tents, a diaper on, No head, his dad screams!

Did you see the names on your screen? The
numbers, The cries, Did it reach your media
stream?

Their motto was not again, but it's a holocaust
like nothing we have ever seen! They
burnt everything in their way, even our ability
to dream!

So, have you seen the desperate attempts
at getting your attention? The GoFundMe
campaigns? The begging, how they crushed
our self-esteem?!

Maybe it caught your attention when Lizzo
finally made a statement with her celebrity
supreme.
No?!

Then definitely when Haley Bailey cried, your
precious queen! I saw the comments, That
was extreme!

But, have you looked us up after that? Have
you donated? Given us some of that green?
Have you lifted a finger and reposted?
Or maybe you liked keeping your hands
clean?

Did you possibly consider reading our
stories, trying to comprehend the message
in between?
No,
I know exactly what you did!
You preferred taking yourself out of the
scene!"

Don't leave us behind?!

I took an eraser and erased myself today.
I liked the idea of me vanishing into thin air, away from all of the suffering we have endured!

As I'm being carried away by the wind along with the leaves of olive trees, I couldn't help but think of my people!

As I traveled from the river to the sea, watching all over the children who cry for their parts to fit back!
The backpacks are filled with red roses drawing a path for me to follow!

The ashes and smoke who traveled side by side with me to warn the people to run away.

How the little pieces of metal flew right into me reaching them before I do!

I shook my mind out of it frightened of the thought of them reaching the home I left behind.

I found myself rushing with the southern wind to get away as fast as I could! I felt helpless, I wanted to leave all of this fear and injustice behind me.

On the edge of city borders I got stopped by a wall made out of shouts and screams. The screaming voices echoing inside of my soul advising me to go back!

I hear them saying: "This destination is out of your reach, You don't have enough on you to pass."

Like the 35 thousand souls who are standing by my side aren't enough! They asked for the 10 thousands coins I gave along the way to the people who needed them more than I!

It's funny that a year ago I was on the other side of that wall, fleeing a similar fate!

As the northern wind was blowing, I was advised to retreat! Catching my ride before I get stuck for eternity in this limbo between hell and paradise!

The northern wind was ready to flee, she shook my hand asking me to join her! I put my hands into hers flying and soaring above all of the land that once was ours!

As I got carried away by her I stumbled upon the rubble of my sister's house. I looked all over their things which were buried deep down in the ground.

I found a rose that has grown from the rubble, reddish, tall with her face facing the sun wishing for me a happy return.

As I waved goodbye seeking refuge in the

middle area of what I have always known as home.

In between palm trees and olive trees, passed by their leaves with the breeze, I found my way into one of the windows I climbed ages ago. I remember how my mother was racing every time to catch me before I fall.

Now, I see her face filled with tears, her breath is racing, sitting next to the empty bed, holding the pillow of my dreams.

Her prayers of mercy upon my soul, wondering if I'm ever finding my way back!

I can hear her blaming herself for letting me go!

How do I undo this?! she asks. How can I rewrite this story so I can have all of my children around me?! What paths led us to escape one awful destiny to fall into a darker one?! How can I fix this?

As she inhales loss in between cries, I got sucked by the air leading me to her lungs into the blood to her heart.

As my feet step into it, I can feel the warmth of her breath. The familiar smell of home I always wondered where it came from!!

I can feel her battoning on her chest as if she can feel me close to her.

As I embrace the rhythm of her heartbeat, I fight to open my eyes. Hearing the sound of my beating heart alarming me of my anxiety attack.

As that story came to an end, I woke up to the sounds of demons creating new nightmares for us to endure.

The sky was raining hell-fire on those who were seeking refuge in what is a so called safe zone!

The smell of burning flesh, the screams of tortured souls, rising with the smoke to the sky banging on the heaven doors to take them before they suffocate from the injustice of this world!

Among the shouts, the cries and the rubbles, there was I and those who were left on the ground wishing for these nightmares to end!

So I'm asking you, are you going to take a stand?
Because, if you were thinking of erasing yourself today, would you take us with you?
Please,
you can't leave us behind!

Day 196

It's day 196
I'm shutting down.
I don't feel the urge to eat anymore!
Nor to breath!

I go to sleep wishing for the next strike to be mine.

The suspense they say!
Well, I can't take it anymore!
My heart is tired.

And I'm exhausting of making scenarios that would never come true!

They are watching us from above.
As you are watching from behind your screen.

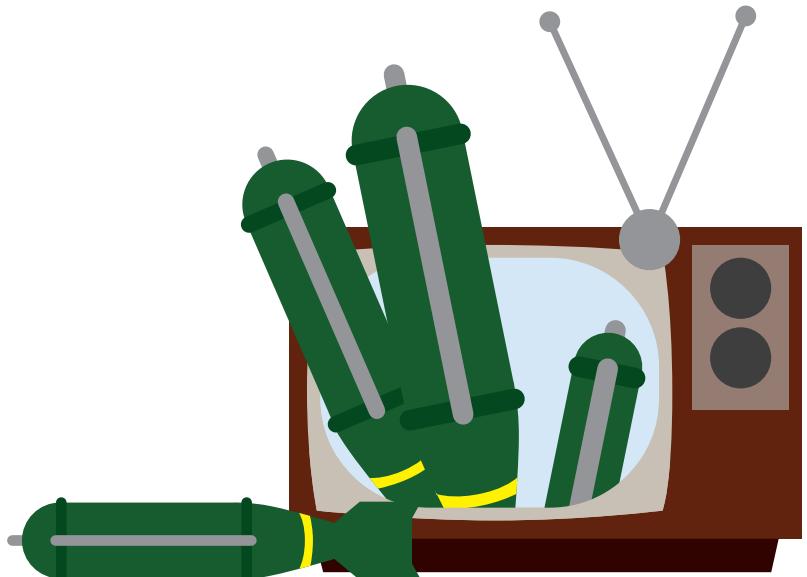
They lie to you and you believe them, yet we are telling the truth on a daily basis and you deny it!

How awful is this?
I don't bother finding an answer anymore.

Because the answer lies within the sounds that disturb our sleep every night!

It's ok, go back to your favorite TV show.
Listen to the newest album of your favorite artist!

We are still here.
Still standing.
And it's either us or them.





FREE POETRY



The rest of the poems in this edition were submitted by our community, some anonymously, some not. These are the words of our people, of our fellow travelers on the path to liberation. We take each poem seriously, and are honored to carry their words.

LATE TO CLASS I DREAM CADAVERS

Nicola Lawford

A guy my age asked for my help on the street and said he lost his phone and the cops couldn't track it and he needed 25 dollars for a bus ticket back to New York where he came from to see MIT and I said *sorry I don't have cash* and he said *there's an ATM across the street* and I said *sorry I'm late to class* because I was late to class.

After class I saw my first three grey hairs in the sixth floor bathroom mirror and I am growing the list of places where I should probably not work like Lockheed and Boeing and probably shouldn't be a cop or soldier and iffy on big tech and politics. The perennial question of can you change the system from within or will you just be complicit or will the system just be there anyway so better you than someone worse or will it feel like sticking your hands in a fume hood glove box. Like in class. I never had toy soldiers but my father did and I wonder if that guy had these questions too before he lost his phone and needed a bus ticket.

After counting my grey hairs I saw a talk about political prisoners and took three copies of the activist zine stapled together on inkjet paper and dreamed the place I always do with three paths and I can never remember which leads to the town and which leads home and last night someone held the flag of Iraq at the third path though I dreamed the flag upside down with black on top and red on the bottom but I did dream the flag. And I dreamed I found a cadaver hanging upside down by the hem of his jeans folded shut and nailed to the bottom of the boardwalk.

I have dreamed cadavers. A year ago I dreamed one in my freezer. His eyes were swollen and sealed shut from the ice. I stood him up in front of me and his body was so tall.

In last night's dream I didn't look too much and just saw something filling a grey puffer jacket grey with black and yellow and some matted hair down below and his weight stretching folds into the denim. I was late to class so I pretended it wasn't there.

FREE POETRY

A LETTER TO BISAN

Unsigned

I wish we could one day be friends and I share with you Cambridge and London and you could share with me Gaza. Although Gaza will remain forever changed, I hope one day you would be able to share with me what Gaza was and what the people of Gaza transformed it into again. I hope that we stop this genocide so you stop needing to be strong and resilient. You never asked to be this resilient, the world imposed it on you. Forced you to suffer, dread and fight like hell. Everyday we feel your strength and your humility, something we have not earned, to attempt to teach the world what you are going through. Everyday you share not only your story but of everyone around you - even the cat you once posted telling your viewers to adopt the cats in Gaza because they are so cute.

Bisan your humanity consumes us all. I'm sorry Bisan, for what this cruel world has done to yours. I couldn't help but realize you're the same age as me - I sometimes see you in the people around me wondering "any of you could have been her?" In fact, many of us could have been you - but by the virtue of being in the US and Europe our lives happen to matter more. You alone hold more humanity than most of these nations combined. You remind me of my own family and we shall continue fighting for you like you were family.

You once shared that your greatest fear is that all your journalism, documenting, and storytelling was all for nothing. I've tuned in almost everyday to your vlogs, feeling relief to hear "Hello this is Bisan, I'm still alive." Often you're in a tent or seeking shelter at some hospital telling us how cold or wet it's been the night before and what you have been through that day. Sometimes you share your fear as bombings are happening around you. Other times you're stepping over blood in the hospital attempting to share with us the horrors so as to move us to fight harder. I feel a deep pit in my stomach when I see the moments of your righteous anger rightfully reach out my phone screen and scold at the end of your video "good morning, you fake world." It must feel so futile to record a video and at the end of posting it going back to the daily genocide. Your voice reaches millions and moves us all to keep pushing harder.

It is our duty that one day your video begins with "Hello this is Bisan, I'm finally back home."

Until then I hope that you can stay warm, safe and strong. We will keep fighting for you and everyone Bisan.



Artist Credit:
@cupidliquor

FREE POETRY

NOT LIKE THEM

Layal Barakat

"You are not like them.
You're intelligent and proper
And educated and prim."
Like who? And when?
How can you blame the people you oppress,
The people destroyed for your comfortable
nest
Walk a mile in their shoes in jest
Tell me you could have passed the test

You think I'm not like them?
They are my skin and my bones
My heart and my soul
God put me here, but oh I know
If I was there, I'd be just as cold

Don't call me a "good Arab" just because I fit
your mold
When the mold is falsely chiseled by what
America has told
Don't call them the terrorists just because the
government sold
You a lie, every accusation is a confession of
old

You say barbaric, but the media taught you
that
You say fanatic, do you even understand
These human beings you put down without
ever having seen
The life that they have lived and the torture
that they bleed
Your comfort is their death, your laugh is their
last breath
The clothing on your back is the child they lost,
express shipped to you on the backs of those
"less" than

You are selfish, just admit it
You reap the life they sow and then you just
dismiss it
As if calling them false names will acquit you
of the blame
If we gave them an honest chance this would
all be a fair game
So don't tell me that your accolades and suc-
cess are all self-made
Because it's not
You're not on top
And if you thought you were, then you must
have forgot
The place you were born says more about who
you'll be
Furthermore you've never paid the price of
war, just cashed the green

And you say I'm not like them, but I am them,
and they are me
I tell you off in your own language so maybe
you can deem
That their lives are worth your own, that they
deserve to live their dreams

This language you force fed me, I spit out
right at your feet
The world doesn't revolve around the West
and its deadly, tragic schemes
It doesn't set the moral standard for how the
world responds to grief
Can't be the judge of how it feels losing life
and property
When it's the criminal that stole it in the first
place ruthlessly
Don't look down upon the proles when you're
the privileged bourgeoisie
If you didn't put them where they are, at least
admit your strategy
That you profit off their pain and make your
living off their pleas

Your good "nature" is not inherent, "nurture"
gave you a head start
The home you raised in was more stable than
their homes all torn apart
So don't think your racist comments and the
"wisdom" you impart
Is anything but ignorance, the secret hate
within your heart

But those who lived in Omelas and chose to
walk away
Are better than self righteous lectures that
you give today
At least speak up, at least stand up for those
you beat and bruised
So you could have your icy lattes and your
pretty little shoes
And your hedonistic parties and your alcoholic
brews
And the gossip from "celebrities" overshadowing
real news
Don't act like you don't have a choice, grow a
spine and choose

Ignore the suffering of others, blame them for
their own demise
Or take your hands off your face, find the
truth amongst the lies
Be honest with yourself, don't forget your luck
and try
To put yourself in their shoes, take one step,
then walk a mile
Because you are just like them, now adult but
once a child
How could you have grown so well if you too
had been deprived
Our blood pumps all the same, we live under
the same skies
Every one of us sleeps, and eats, seeks mean-
ing, and then dies

So just be kind and open, start to break down
all the walls
Because we are all the same, only human
after all

PALESTINIAN SURFERS

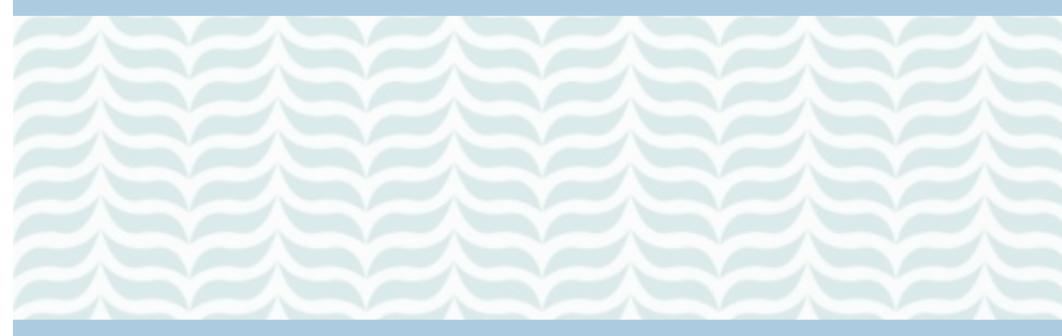
Nader Ibrahim

Palestinian Surfers
Emigrated to Chile now
With gratitude and good lifestyle
Can only bring a good healing

Palestinian Surfers
Ride any wave of the universe
Earthquakes, wars, and tsunamis
They say, *Al-hamdu lillāhi Rabbil-'Ālamīn*
(الحمد لله رب العالمين)
They pray, *Hasbunā Allāhu wa ni'ma al-Wakīl*
(حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل)

As for the oppressors
They think they're living forever
Creating waves of destruction
That Palestinians are surfing

Palestinian Surfers
Ride every wave of the universe
Earthquakes, wars, and tsunamis
They say, *Al-hamdu lillāhi Rabbil-'Ālamīn*
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WILFRED OWEN IN GAZA

Richard Solomon

If in some fucked-up dream, you too could pace
in the cratered rubble we killed them in,
And see the hunger gnawing in their eyes
Skin stretched on bone
While the fascists at the gates
Sip slushies and smile;
If you could hear, at every airstrike, the blood
Come frothing into shrapnel-flecked lungs
Obscene as cholera, bitter as the Zion
of mass graves under Jewish flags,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To Christians ardent for the Son of Man,
That old Lie: A land without a people
For a people without a land.

WHEN WE FIGHT WE WIN

RDK

when we fight we win
we chant
but do we win?

when I was a little girl
I thought I could win
By fighting
The people that lied
screamed
twisted
surveilled
violated
threatened me

this isn't my first rodeo.

I fought
With everything I had
My words, friends, truth,
even my body
It was never enough.

do we win?

We love you, they'd say.
That's why we're doing this.

at least MIT
never claimed to love me
at least MIT
wasn't supposed to
at least MIT
is so textbook evil
that when I fight
I can hold strong
to my compass
never letting them twist me.

maybe MIT is a different enemy
maybe we can win against this one

do we win?

or maybe we can't.

what does it mean?
to fight like you have already lost?
to be hopeless beyond words
and to still
fight
because your fire is all you have left?

how do you fight so fearlessly
they ask
and I shrug

because there's only one answer
mit doesn't scare me anymore
nothing can, after my parents

mit can take away my body
but my mind
my sanity
is already gone
i am a girl driven mad by child abuse

but my compass is clear
in service of the Palestinian resistance
when everything is hopeless, nothing is
hopeless.
we have lost far, far, far too much.
all we can do
is fight.

do we win?

not as individuals
not ever.
because that's how abuse works.
we
as people
can never win
against our abusers.

because even though I escaped
I am forever
that little girl sobbing on the floor
throwing her fist in the air
the girl who had lost
but wanted to make sure that they didn't win
either
i will never escape that girl
i will never escape that loss

and so too has mit scarred us

but we win in the only way we can
in the way that makes us not just abuse
victims
but activists
organizers
a movement
as a collective
as comrades
together.

because we fight for something bigger than
ourselves
and we?
can never win
but the Palestinian cause?
the land?
it has already won.
it's only a matter of time

because when we fight
together
we have already won

THIS IS NOT A GENOCIDE

Layal Barakat

This is not a genocide
I'm offended that you'd think
so, that you'd stand here tak-
ing sides
Despite what the people want
you to believe
Carpet bombing neighborhoods is not an issue please
Be careful of the sources of
the news that you consume
Because there's a lot of propaganda, a lot of stark untruths
Why would you believe words
past, of Einstein, Malcolm X,
When you could trust the experts, our esteemed celebrities of the West

This is not a genocide,
Because the birth rate is still
higher than the rate at which
they die
Which is a completely passive
thing that happens right here
all the time
There's no such thing as "ethnic
cleansing", or "being occupied"
These are just words that
they've invented to spin up all
their lies

Do you know what an occupation is? You lying racist scum-
bag
Have you ever been to Israel?
I'll bet you never have.
You've never heard the sirens,
seen the rockets streak the
sky
You've never seen us running
to our bomb shelters to hide
Nevermind that kids in Gaza
have nowhere to hide
And never mind the collateral
damage, the human shields
we leave to die

This is not a calendar, but a
list, of all the terrorists
Who guarded all the hostages
beneath Al-Shifa's premises
If you could read Arabic per-
haps then you could read
That commanders Monday
Tuesday Wednesday are the
target enemies
A bag of twenty weapons is all
that we could find
This is all the evidence we
used to justify
Invading this massive hospital,
leaving helpless patients to die

This is not collective punishment,
How many times do I need to
clarify
That all of them deserve this,
every snake and every child
We will take the land of Gaza,
all of it this time.
These animals don't need
electricity, they don't need
water, or gasoline,
Especially after we push the
masses south they could be
As we turn two million residents
into two million refugees.
Why can't you see? That we're
being subjugated by these
people whose only freedom is
the sea?

These kids who throw rocks at
tanks, in hopes that one day
they'll be free?

These are not war crimes,
White phosphorus never really
did fall from the sky
We never bombed those bakeries or refugee camps or innocent
lives
We did not attack the safe
routes, and we didn't snipe
her child
And say to put him down and
walk away else she would die.
We didn't dig a pit and ask
refugees to sit in it
On top of corpses of their people
before adding their bodies
to the pile

We did not run over anyone
with our tanks, and we deny
Killing women and their babies
point blank, execution-style
In the school that they escaped to, to protect their families' lives

After stripping their men naked
and parading them horri-
fied

This is not a genocide.
And if you say it one more
time...
Just because we have the
bigger military, doesn't mean
we have to moderate our defense,
A true measure of democracy
is how much firepower it takes
to suppress
The native population and to
stifle all unrest.

I'm not sure why they don't
thank us, for fast-tracking their
dispossession
Or why they won't stay still under
years of bold oppression
By our count, the Palestinians
had started this aggression
Don't ask me for the math, and
don't ask me any questions

This can't be a genocide,
Our counter says that 30,000
terrorists have died,
You can't believe the videos of
severed limbs, of blatant lies
You can't believe the survivors,
who's entire families
have died,
Or the 18,000 newly-orphaned
children left alive
You can't believe the little girls
and their little wails and cries.
As they call out to their dead
fathers wrapped in white and
paralyzed.
Don't talk to me about the
people whose bodies have
been vaporized

This cannot be a genocide,
Just look at all our soldiers and the
way they spend their time
How they blow up universities
and shoot at homes to clear
the land
How they pose with lingerie
and treat it like it is contraband
How the snipers shoot at
movements, friendly fire is on
brand
How they cheer at this de-
struction at every level of
command
This is surely to save the hos-
tages, this has always been
the plan.

This is not a genocide.
Genocide requires genocidal
intent.
We did everything in our power
to be able to prevent
The loss of civilian lives, and
the pain they underwent
And if you don't believe me,
well that's your time that you
misspent
South Africa's ICJ case will go
nowhere because in the end,
They're being anti-semitic, and
the things that they present
Are not what really happened,
it's just not the way it went

MORNING!

I WOKE UP TO EMAILS, JOINT PAIN,
AND GENOCIDES FAST & SLOW

Austin Cole

"I am so tired of waiting.
Aren't you..."
— Langston Hughes, "Tired"

i dream of sleep,
rest long,
unperturbed,
no fitful turns,
no frightened jolts,
no early dawn anxieties
wracking my solemn mind.
i long for sleep,
restoration and refuge
for my bones to settle,
for my tendons to release,
and my breath to end its labored pace
that stalked me for who knows how many days
and months.

morning! i woke up to emails, joint pain, and
i crave sleep
and it escapes me —

So long as towns are turned to rubble,
so long as children, women, men (people) are
eviscerated
into ash, splatters of organs separated from
their host,
so long as my brothers still face the chair
or mysterious injections or a noose,
the method matters little to those grinning
rosy faces gathered like moths to flame,
lemmings jumping for genocide just like their
grandpappies,
leaking puss from their joyful gums, they
half-heartedly excuse
the bloodlust as
law
justice
democracy —

for some time the state and its vigilantes depurated were content to allow a more slow-grinding
death wheel to sicken, maim, and depress us
into submission, disunity, dilution, despair, annihilation,
and yet here we stand,
bent, cracked, crushed, not quite broken.

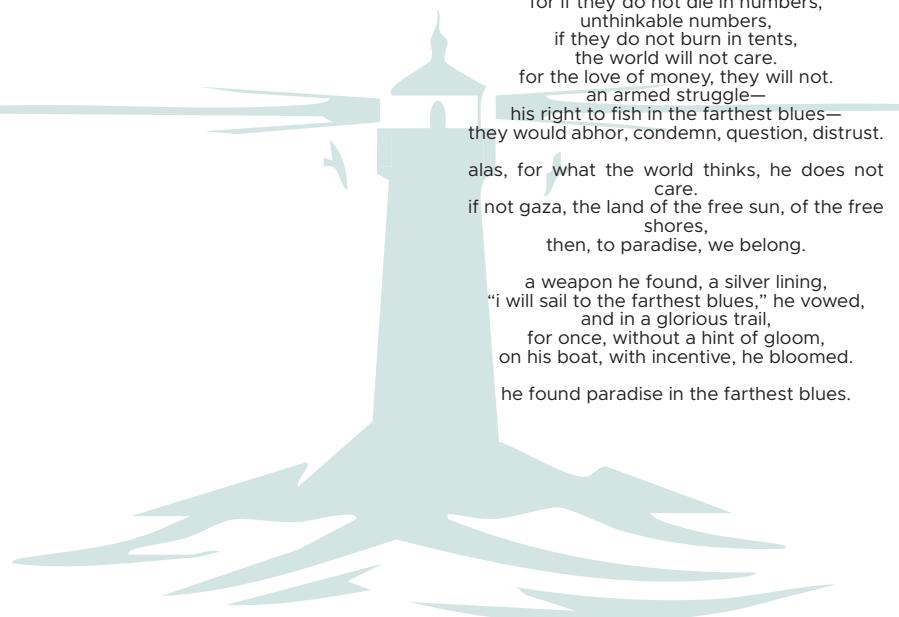
This piece originally appeared in *Hood Communist* on November 28, 2024. *Hood Communist* is a grassroots publication centering African and African-diaspora voices. They stand principally with the Black/African working class and strive toward anti-imperialist, decolonial, anti-patriarchal, abolitionist politics. Submissions to *Hood Communist* center African people, African diaspora, and the African continent. Learn more about their mission at <https://hoodcommunist.org/principles-of-unity/>



MY GUMS

Naoma Rick

i am worried
about my gums, how lucky i am
to be worried about my gums not
if i should sleep
in the same room as my family so when
israel murders us at least
it is our own arms we die in, lucky —
for fuck's sake — is what i am. can't remember
the last time i saw my dentist but
i can tell you she's alive, hasn't
been woken by the screams of children
who can't spell "bomb" who can't read
the words on the bellies of missiles
that fly into them who
stand in lines for water that's more mud
than water more brown
than clear, i've got a sliver of
blood in my gums the size of a millimeter,
the congo is one million times
my mouth. this side of the toothbrush
— lucky —
i see my face in girls
twelve years old digging for cobalt
to make digital brains build facism HA!
they can't tell me we don't owe her the world
because we owe her
every raindrop that brushes fresh petals
in spring and every smile
that forgets her,
but when i show my gums i cannot forget
because they bleed until
the last child is free from this
soul-killing earth-stealing thing
we call home.



THE

GENOCIDE AFTERBLUES

Ayat Abodayeh

blue, never-ending, the waves billowed,
the fisherman with his net,
a silhouette of melancholy.
not far he sailed,
for a bullet could end his life;
for food he searched, an end to his strife.

his return to the shore,
in a forlorn tread,
to the rubble of his once warm home.
once built with ten years of love,
once filled with laughter and voices,
once held a family of ten,
once a hearth...

the siege, merciless evermore,
starvation and disease clawing at his door.
no cure to end his grief,
without a weapon, he ached in frustration—
the broken frame of his lover,
the smithereens of a clay pot;

his daughter's dress, clutched in his hand,
and he wailed, howled a song of pain—
a song never to be heard by the world,
a song that would only echo off walls.

for if they do not die in numbers,
unthinkable numbers,
if they do not burn in tents,
the world will not care.
for the love of money, they will not.
an armed struggle—
his right to fish in the farthest blues—
they would abhor, condemn, question, distrust.

alas, for what the world thinks, he does not
care.
if not gaza, the land of the free sun, of the free
shores,
then, to paradise, we belong.

a weapon he found, a silver lining,
"i will sail to the farthest blues," he vowed,
and in a glorious trail,
for once, without a hint of gloom,
on his boat, with incentive, he bloomed.

he found paradise in the farthest blues.

A LETTER TO LEBANON FROM YEMEN

Unsigned

Could there be a time when the people in Baalbek visited Shibam and wondered if they were sister cities,
Would a traveler from Nabatieh see the lush hills of Ibb and feel at home,
Could a sailor from Beirut come to the shores in Hudaydeh and feel yearning to the breeze of the Red Sea,

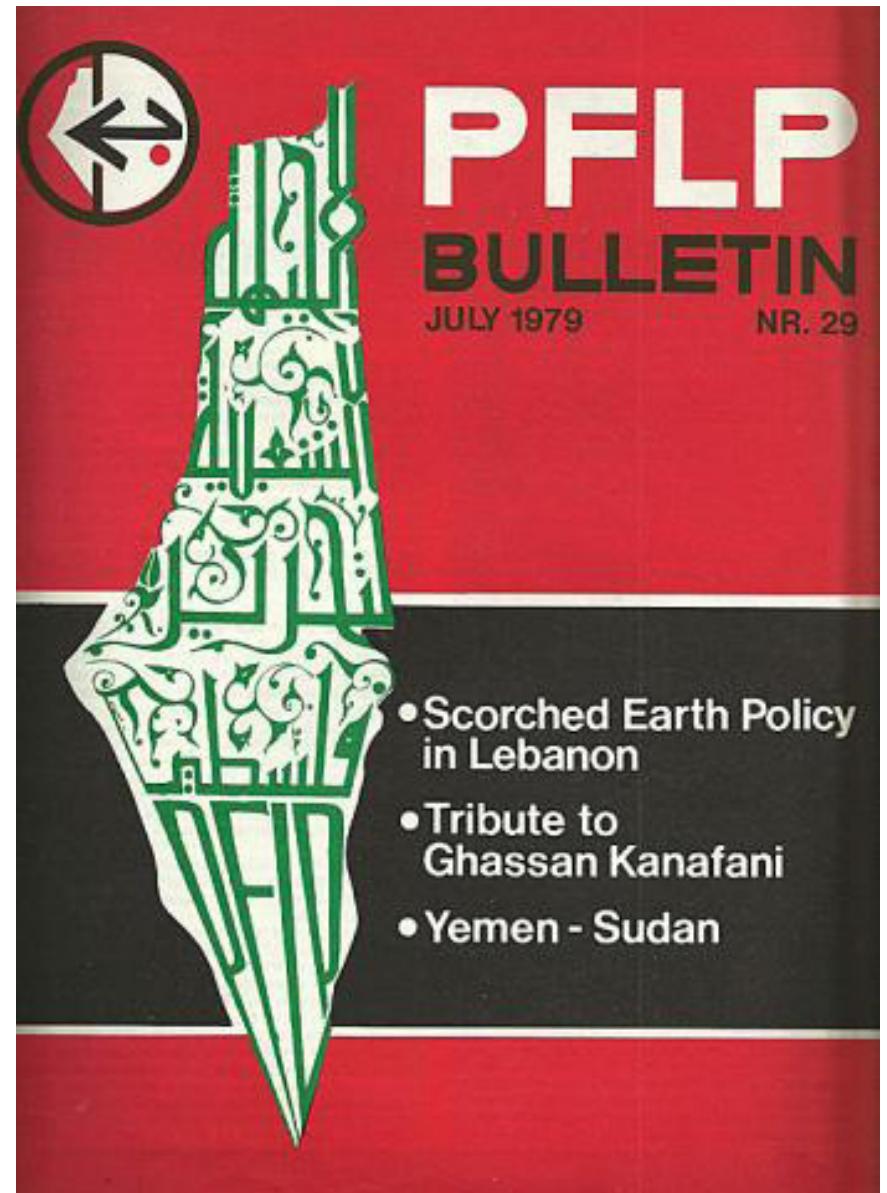
Would the stories of revolutionaries from Radfan who ignited the revolution against the British occupiers from Jbeil Al-Huriya fan the fire of memories in Bint Jbeil repelling Zionist invaders.
Would their poems sounds the same or their songs pluck the heart strings of the other today?

If revolutionary love was measured by the distance of our hearts, consider us a ventricle. If revolutionary love was measured in volume, consider us the grass in your fields. If revolutionary love was measured in attention, consider us the stray hair strand on the forehead of a loved one that we correct. If revolutionary love was measured in the amount of letters we write to you, we

can only imagine that our ink would deplete and none would be left for our armies to exchange messages and fight so our nations can meet, in a free land.

With Solidarity from Port to Port,
Jbeil to Jbeil,
Freedom fighters to freedom fighters

الحق ما بيموت



Historical bulletin poster from 1979 demonstrating the decades-long history of solidarity between resistance groups in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen. Reproduced purely for informational purposes.

in Cambridge
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Editors

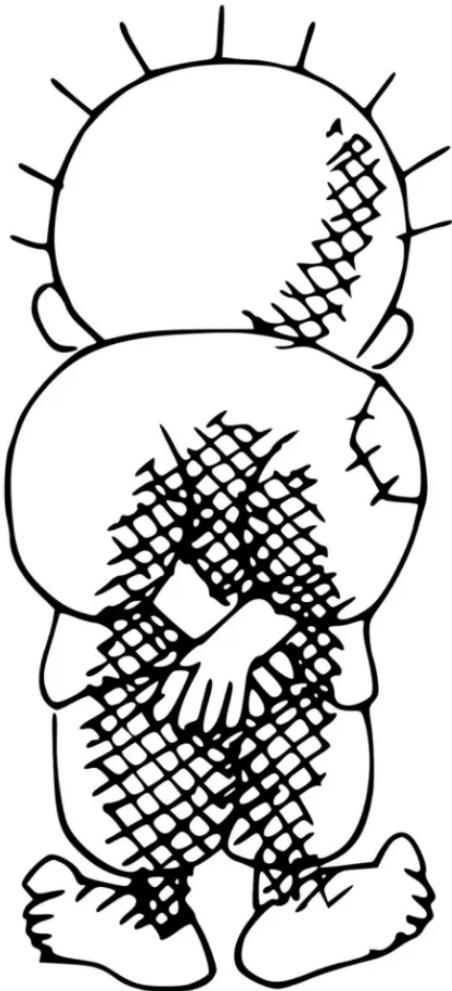
Megha Vemuri
Sophie Green
Prahlad Iyengar
Ellie Montemayor

Written Revolution is a community publication. If you would like to get involved with this community, whether it be through updates on future distributions, submitting pieces, or production and operations, please fill out the form at the QR code (see: front inside cover) and our team will get in touch.

About the Cover

The Hunger Strike is Over 2017
Painted by Franz Abu Selma in June 2017
Acrylic on Canvas
71 x 56 cm

Editors' Note: This work was painted after the success of the mass hunger strike of Palestinian prisoners held by the occupation. The hunger strike was led by Marwan Barghouti, a Palestinian political prisoner and key figure during the first and second Intifadas.



LONG LIVE THE STUDENT INTIFADA

**WRITTEN
REVOLUTION**



**IF I MUST DIE,
YOU MUST LIVE
TO TELL MY
STORY**

REFAAT ALAREER

