

List of contributors

Many of the poems and writings in this collection were kindly submitted by the Women's UN Report Network (WUNRN), <http://www.wunrn.com>.

Right to Life, a Sri Lankan human rights group, kindly submitted the collection of untitled children's paintings depicting the experience of forced disappearances, which were part of an art competition in 2000.

Maryam Sheikh Abdi is a program officer for the Population Council's Frontiers in Reproductive Health program, based in Nairobi, Kenya. Abdi works on a project that aims to accelerate the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting in the Somali community of North Eastern Province of Kenya. Her poem "The Cut" was submitted by the WUNRN.

Sita Agarwal wrote the book *Genocide of Women in Hinduism*, which can be found at the Internet Ambedkar Library.

Lydia Brackett is a RAWA supporter from the USA. She wrote the poem "How would it feel" after trying on the burqa.

Mahmoud Darwish (15 March 1941--9 August 2008) was born in al-Birwa, Acre, in what is now Western Galilee. Darwish published his first book of poetry, *Asafir bila ajniha*, at the age of nineteen. He subsequently published over thirty volumes of poetry and eight books of prose. He has received numerous awards, and his work has been translated and published in 20 languages. He has been called the 'quintessential poet of anomie and loss, and of the Palestinian cause'.

Jane Evershed's work may be found at <http://www.evershed.com>. Her poem "Women dancing humanity into the future" was submitted by the WUNRN.

Basil Fernando is the director of the Asian Human Rights Commission, as well as a poet. He has published several collections of poems. His writings may be seen at www.basilfernando.net under literature.

Dr Carole R Fontaine is the John Taylor Professor of Biblical Theology and History at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton, MA, where she is also Resident Artist. She is an expert in wisdom traditions and women in the Ancient Near East, and a Human Rights Defender sitting on numerous NGO boards dealing with the religious rights of women and girls. Her poem 'The stone and woman' was submitted by the WURN.

W M Gayathri Priyakari Gunasekara is a Grade 12 student in Sri Lanka. 'Tearful Poems of a Mother' is one of the poems from a collection of Sinhalese poems by children of grade 3 – 12 from the anthology *Kadulu Mathakayen Obbata (Beyond the memory of tears)* by an organization called Kalapeya Api (We of the free trade zone) based in Negombo, Sri Lanka.

HONG Sung-dam was born in 1955 and graduated from the faculty of drawing, Chosun University. In 1979, he joined the "Gwangju Free Painters' Meeting" and worked as a propaganda agent during the Gwangju Democratic Uprisings Movement. In November of the same year, he held his first individual art exhibition. In 1983, he established a 'people's art school'. Starting with his first Hengsch Gallery Invitational Exhibition in 1988, Germany, he has had several overseas exhibitions. His work addresses issues of violence, protest and rehabilitation.

Layad Kasiyanaphi is a Filipina artist and musician. Layad's husband was a human rights activist who was killed in November 2005 in the ongoing extrajudicial killings taking place in the Philippines.

M I Kuruwilla (19 January 1918—17 November 1993) was born in India, and migrated to Sri Lanka. He was among the founding staff at the Aquinas University College in 1954, and was Head of the English Department till his retirement in the late 1980s. He is known to many as a great teacher of literature, who also contributed literary criticisms to newspapers and radio, for which he won the award for non-fiction prose (literary criticism) in 1985. One of his strongest ideas was that "the most enduring and universal art is that which has the deepest national and local roots".

Federico Mayor is the former Director General of UNESCO. Her poem "Women" was submitted by the WUNRN.

Faraz Ahmed Naveed, a student at Karachi University and young peace activist was kidnapped, tortured and killed on November 8, 2004. It is suspected that Faraz—son of prominent human rights activist and journalist Baseer Naveed—was targeted because of Baseer's vociferous campaign against the construction of the Lyari Expressway near Karachi. Little or no action has been taken by the police or government to investigate Faraz' death, leaving the killers at large.

Vanessa O'Dwyer has written several pieces on human rights, which can be found at <http://poetsforhumanrights.ning.com/profile/VanessaODwyer>.

Shailja Patel is an award-winning poet, playwright, theatre artist, and creator of Migitude. Her poem "What moves us" was submitted by the WURN.

David Ronald Bruce Pekrul is a Canadian poet who started writing in 2004. His work can be viewed at <http://www.myhiddenvoice.com/>. According to David, "The pictures that my words paint may not always be pretty, but I hope they are pictures worth viewing, for I write about what I see in the world around me, whether it be good, bad or otherwise."

Cecil Rajendra is a Nobel nominated poet. He is much respected for his pioneering work as a human rights lawyer and environmental activist as well as his poetry, which has explored the cultural, spiritual and material values of Asian society and critiqued both industrial development and development aid. In 2005, Cecil Rajendra was the first ever recipient of the Malaysian Lifetime Humanitarian Award for his legal aid work and his inspirational poetry. That same year he was also nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Fr Roberto Reyes, also known as the Running Priest, currently lives in Hong Kong where he works for human rights. He travels frequently to the Philippines where he is involved in many different aspects of human rights.

Jayne Sachs wrote the words and music for "Twisted Ballerina", which was submitted by the WURN. More information on Sachs' work can be found at <http://www.jaynesachs.com/>.

Somia Sadiq is a member of the Nepalese Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party (CMKP).

Bashir Sakhawarz is an Afghan poet who writes for the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). Bashir's work may be found at <http://www.rawa.org/bashir.htm>.

In the introduction to the poem “My sister” Bashir writes, ‘I have not heard from my sister for many years. I do not know if she is alive.’

K G Sankarapillai is a contemporary Indian poet writing in Malayalam, and has won the National Award for Poetry in India on two occasions.

Bulleh Shah (1680 to 1757), a renowned Muslim spiritual leader of the sub continent of Indo-Pakistan, was a Punjabi Sufi poet. Bulleh Shah’s poetry and philosophy strongly criticizes the Islamic religious orthodoxy of his days. Bulleh’s lifespan was marked with communal strife between Muslims and Sikhs; amongst the violence, Bulleh was a beacon of hope and peace for the citizens of Punjab, maintaining that violence was not the answer to violence.

Aditya Shankar is a young Malayali poet and writer.

Sue Silvermarie is an American supporter of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). Her poem “I Stand by Your Ear Unseen” is about Bedi Begum who was murdered by flogging at the order of the Taliban in July of 1999, one of 60 women to die as a result of flogging that year. This narrative combines the elements of several true stories about various Afghan women.

SipakV is a coordinator of the FOKO Project in Madagascar, who prefers to go by the pseudonym SipakV, She wrote this poem “Abandoned Woman” in Malagasy and English.

Bharat B Trivedi is a Commerce Graduate from Bombay University and a budding poet. His poem “In the Name of God” was forwarded by Hasni Essa of Islam for Pluralism and the International Human Rights Organisation (IHRO).

W P Ruwani Wanniarhchi is a grade 10 student in Sri Lanka, whose poem ‘Is my son sleeping under the mara tree?’ is published in the anthology *Kadulu Mathakayen Obbata (Beyond the memory of tears)*.

Anna Vera Williams is a poet who writes on a wide variety of subjects. She kindly makes her work available at <http://freepoemsonline.blogspot.com>.

Woeser, a Tibetan poet and writer, was compelled to move from Lhasa to Beijing, where, even under constant harassment by the authorities, she has continued to write.