



# **We Are All Palestinians**

**An anthology in solidarity with  
the people of Palestine**



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**An anthology in solidarity  
with the people of Palestine**

*Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians.*

—Nelson Mandela

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# Wajeehah Aayeshah

## My privileged life under the shadow of genocide

Today, I can't do life.  
I can't wake up or sleep.  
I can't talk coherently.

I can't attend another meeting.  
I can't read another article about education and kindness.

Most importantly,  
Today, I can't dream.  
Today, I can't imagine.

My mind is full of images laden with horror—  
body parts,  
burnt skin mingled with melted flesh and bones.

Saviours covered in dust and ashes.

Struggling to find what's left of humans in  
the rubble, still hot.

Their ears, still ringing.

They pray and cry and console each other.  
They keep going.

They keep going yet I, I who have been drinking tea on my comfortable couch—

FREEZE.

Their pain seeps through the screen.

It engulfs me.  
I want their strength and resilience to seep through too.  
It will.  
It always does.  
But it's taking time.

Today, I read Hind Khoudary's tweet—

“I want to disappear”.

And though I live with a broken heart.  
Today, it breaks a little more.  
Today, I want to hold her tight and make all the atrocities she witnessed disappear.

Motasem A Dalloul  
Hossam Shabat  
Mosab Abu Toha

My siblings in humanity—  
living,

witnessing,

reporting a continuous nightmare.

One I couldn't bear in my dreams—let alone experience.

Today, I can't do life.  
I have the luxury not to.

Today, I can't do life  
But I can do poetry.

Today, this is the best I can do.  
Tomorrow, I will do better.

## **Jim Aitken**

### **Beneath the Rubble**

Beneath the rubble of Gaza  
lie the broken bodies of babies, of children,  
of their parents and grandparents too  
along with the fragments of bomb casings  
beneath the rubble of Gaza.

And it is a rubble that is generic  
for it brings to mind Stalingrad  
and Dresden; it brings to mind  
Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Mosul and Aleppo  
and vast swathes of Afghanistan.

Beneath the rubble of Gaza  
also lie some unlearned lessons—  
the one about rubble begetting more rubble  
the other one that peace only comes with justice  
beneath the rubble of Gaza.

## Uday, One Day

In memory of Uday Abu Mohsen who lived only one day after being killed during the Siege of Gaza, 2023.

Uday was the baby boy's name. Uday, it was.  
He would have known so little but he would  
have known he was someone with being.  
He would have been welcomed and loved.

He would have been welcomed with fear  
and would have known little of the blast  
that ended his one-day old life, mayfly Uday.  
Yet he leaves behind much more than a name.

He leaves behind the insanity of surgical strikes,  
the criminality of collateral damage, the nonsense  
of precision bombing, the lunatic costs—and profits—  
of warfare set against the massacre of the innocents.

Uday's death certificate was bizarrely issued before  
any birth certificate arrived and the bombing continued  
after his death. But mayfly Uday must be remembered  
and not just in Gaza and in Palestine, not just there.

The cry of Uday must be heard in Israel, in Syria, in Iraq,  
in Russia and Ukraine, in Yemen, Tigray and Sudan.  
Uday's little whimper should cross oceans, mountains  
and plains, teeming cities and deserts, turning louder.

Turning louder all the time so that the whole world  
begins to realise that without justice there is no peace;  
that only justice can guarantee peace. Uday, one day  
peace and justice will reign in your name. Uday, one day.

## **Aileen Angsutorn**

### **Sonnet 18**

*after William Shakespeare*

How can I compare my words to your pain?  
You livestream your struggle, your fight, your pleas;  
As media and states shake you again  
Off truth, the Nakba all too long unceased;  
Sometimes too vile complicity's eye winks,  
And often at bodies melanated;  
To undeciding force and greed they drink,  
And nature's 'resources' celebrated;  
But our solidarity must not fade,  
Nor lose momentum from any backlash;  
Nor shall accountability evade  
Institutions when they try to pinkwash:  
So long as we act, ban collectively,  
So long lives hope, that you will become free.

## **Nell Attwood**

### **I see Sheffield**

Flag poles tied to bike panniers, a triangle and three stripes a new tail for the two wheels, peeking out from the traffic and towering above cars, cyclists spreading solidarity up and down seven steep hills

Green white red and black draped from window frames. Student accommodation, terraced houses and high rises make statements in four colours

Stickers line the shop windows of Spital Hill, Arabic and English interchanged like falafels and tea, leading you up to Ellesmere Green  
A small patch of grass that makes so much noise, loudspeakers and samba bands,

we gather in volume

I don't know how his vocal cords survive but every time the same young man begins, bellowing his call and being met with responses that roll down The Wicker, words tumble like water in a river, bouncing off buildings like rocks by the sea

We learn them like lyrics, and children catch on, clutching their mother's hand as they lead the chants in between lollypop licks

Watermelons appear on earrings, crocheted into keyrings, and printed onto t shirts, calls for a ceasefire sewn into every single thing we own

Badges shaped like a stolen land pinned to workplace lanyards and keffiyehs reach across your shoulders, black and white crosshatched like hand sketches of a biro olive branch

We fundraise and we scream from the river to the sea

We rally and we sing, choirs of women serenading supermarkets-

*no nonono, don't buy dates, no nonono, don't buy coca cola*

The message reaches the North East and Darnall stores empty their fridges

Boycott season continues outside Sheffield Student's Union, tents are pitched and lectures are abandoned. Communities fuel a new generation of activists with flasks of coffee and lentil-shaped hugs

Faces become familiar through Friday demonstrations, commuters honk their horns and raise their thumbs, passengers stand with us before starting their weekend on a train

I see artists self-organise and write poems of horror and hope, shared at The Showroom with just a pen and microphone

I see musicians at Crookes Social Club, their melodies transcending borders and transporting us to Nablus, reminding us to come together, to heal together, to grieve together and to fight together

I see Sheffield, and I see women holding red-stained sheets like bleeding babies.

I see Sheffield and I see a mother and daughter striking in solidarity their stomachs strong but yearning for the taste of peace.

I see Sheffield, and I see the sound waves of speeches echoed across the city centre and silencing thousands.

I see Sheffield and I see roads      blocked.

I see Sheffield and I see hands      holding cardboard signs doused in paint.

I see Sheffield and I see hands      holding one another.

## Ruth Aylett

### Eyeless

They bombed other people's houses  
in Gaza, fish-in-a-barrel  
so we sold them some more bombs

agreed that those others  
were terrorists  
so the world was probably  
better off without them  
agreed that the planes  
had done everything possible  
to avoid civilian casualties  
and sold them some more bombs

agreed that they had every right  
to defend themselves against  
fish in barrels  
who after all were terrorists,  
had only themselves to blame  
and we sold them some more bombs

But answer me this  
what life must you have lived  
to be a terrorist aged eight  
or an elderly woman terrorist  
aged sixty or a doctor  
in the clinic that must have been  
hiding terrorists  
or they wouldn't have bombed it  
would they?

and tell me how fish in a barrel  
can swim away when the bombs fall



## **Fernanda Felix Binati**

### **Butterfly Cinquain Poems**

#### *United Nations*

People's sins  
The cause of war  
Dividing ceasefire talks  
They bow before the silent crimes  
People's minds  
What if thoughts were less about sin  
And more on what makes them  
Reconcile and  
Break free

#### *Medicine for Hunger*

The greed  
Of modern minds,  
Shape how kids live and die.  
Submissive to unfair tradings  
Kids starve,  
But human kindness, a warrior,  
That makes love primary,  
Kills the hunger,  
Hearts full.

*Tragedy of War: Censured Children*

Children  
Are free to play,  
Their powerful wisdom  
Threatened when the weapons arrived,  
Impaired  
Freedom, a weapon to suppress,  
Censored more than the media,  
Now are speechless  
Children.



## Curtis Brown

### What does a Black British boy have to do...

with Brown Palestinian boys  
scanning the scree of mosques,  
churches, homes? Later, I'll know  
to ask, but for now, the question  
avoids this knee-high, fettering  
little urbanite, running around

his Ma's hem. I don't remember  
exactly when I decided  
it was fitting to call my mother  
Ma. *I'm not a goat!*  
she once replied, before  
resuming hopeful conversation

on visiting the Promised Land.  
Her resolute voice—birthing  
hope, fathered by the struggle  
to raise this young kid—dark  
spawn, future threat, unwanted, here.  
But I'm just a Black boy, in England.

What do I have in common with a Brown  
boy in Palestine? I don't even know  
where it is. I only know I want to go  
to that place big people sing about.  
A place with streets paved in gold,  
where colour isn't the reason  
we never grow old.



Never grow old  
In a land where we'll never grow old  
Never grow old  
Never grow old  
In a land where we'll never grow old.



## Olives

I've always thought that olive oil only comes  
in small, long-necked bottles with white caps.

At the altar, I watch ministers beseech God,  
anointing heads of kneelers in need.

The closest I've gotten to an olive tree in England?—  
an illustration of an olive branch in the mouth of a dove.

The branch signifies land; not peace—that's the dove.

I've formed the unscientific opinion that cooking with olive oil  
is near sacrilege.

::

Travelling through Levant terrain, I've come to understand how  
Mediterranean olive = Caribbean coconut = English vegetable.

I've begun dressing in olive oil, but still do not like the taste  
of actual olives.

::

There's been news of a changing climate, so I've bought  
an olive tree from Columbia Road Market.

My Olive tree has borne fruit.

I've started eating Olives.

Can you believe it—I've only now realised: Olive Oyl  
also comes as a spindly dame, constantly contested  
by Popeye and Brutus.

::

There's been news of a change in climate, settlers boldly  
destroyed groves of olives on contested land, with impunity.

The price of olives has rocketed—a life; for an attempt  
to harvest a rotting crop.

Eating my salad, dressed in olive oil, I think on ministers,  
anointing settlements; doveless skies; broken branches, left  
to wither; unnurtured—earth—without peace.

::

Who will harvest the peace?

## Every Body

Helicopters disperse their orders  
like giant snowflakes—*Leave  
your homes immediately; Go  
south; For your safety; Do not  
return until further notice;  
Leave your shelter  
in the city.* They grab whatever  
they can carry, leave  
the rest to memory.

Part of me wants  
to pound the screen,  
let them know—  
we know—there is no safety.  
Should they find prosperity  
elsewhere, they would  
only be tall enough  
to kiss his boots.  
They'd get nothing  
for the trouble

they've seen. He would only  
ever pause to  
replace them.  
Nobody  
would know; because

♪

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen  
Nobody knows my sorrow  
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen  
Glory hallelujah!

Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down  
Sometimes I'm almost to the ground  
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen...



except  
our archival bodies—medleys of misery  
and hope—holding our sorrow  
captive, for countless generations.  
Every  
    Body  
        Knows.

### **Space for the Little Things**

*After reported quotes by children in Gaza*

I don't want to be a number;  
don't want them to die like we are.  
I dream of a future where I can live.

All children should be able to live  
in peace. We hope that one day  
we can open our books again,

instead of hiding from bombs.  
Our rooms shake, then our hearts.  
Every day it feels like we're next.

It feels like we're just getting by  
on luck—mothers trying to clean  
the dust that filled the house;

our dad... I can't take it any more.  
I dream of a life like other children.  
Running and drawing—

once my best hobbies. Life  
is scary now, our roofs are falling  
on our heads.

# Elizabeth Chadwick Pywell

## Boys, Digging

This is the oldest cold.  
Hard rain sparks leaves alight —  
my boy plays but I'm elsewhere,  
ungloved, news in hand.

bare feet repeat  
bare feet

Bare feet repeat themselves  
through ash across my screen  
as static fires  
mock wingbeats in our trees.

bare feet repeat  
fire  
fire  
firing

I see  
a child —  
a child's eyes  
closing —

closing

closing

Last week my son created  
a forest in a plastic cup  
to make it storm  
& grow his own weeds.

last week he dug  
a garden in a paper cup  
to please his sister

Now he digs for treasure  
while I watch a mother  
bury her baby  
with the sound off.

a mother  
buries her —  
baby

Same rains, same skies, same rivers converging under our damp feet.  
Floods from here to everywhere of useless, watery prayer.

Tongues out wide, we taste the deluge.

Boys' smiles, their open faces —



## David Clinch

### A Palimpsest

*A manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed on effaced earlier writing.*

Erased, Stolen, hidden, destroyed  
The memories blur and fade  
New voices heard in our homes  
New language guiding our steps  
New music sounding from behind the front door of the house  
Where I sang in childhood reverie  
My past, my history is drowning

I stand now resistant  
Each syllable of my language rescuing, retrieving our memories

I stand now resistant  
Each remembered piece of my past, itself a precious stone.

Recovering, rebuilding, reminding me  
Returning. 'Al Awda'

The rich treasury of the past remains  
Within a generation that resists the suffocation of this occupation  
The attempted genocide  
Our documents, our music, our buildings, our artifacts  
Our homes, our status  
Stolen, hidden, looted

Palestine, an ancient manuscript that will not be erased  
There is no empty page on which to rewrite our history  
The past will not be removed, forgotten.  
We will rebuild when you destroy—Always

Our separation and isolation bring pain and loss

Our memory, together, is resistance  
Preserved, unbreakable  
Our history written by our hands

We celebrate our customs  
We mourn our dead  
We share our sadness  
We revive our memories  
We resist your occupation  
We will share the joy of peace with justice  
We make our history  
Our words are on the page, not yours.

*October 2021*

### **‘Recurrent displacement’**

*A term used by UNOCHA for the repeated forced removal of Palestinians in Gaza from their homes and also shelters to what Israel has cruelly named ‘designated safe areas’*

“This is an evacuation order,” they said  
“Go west to Al Mawasi,” they said  
“It is a designated safe area,” they said  
“Take your family,” they said  
“Take your belongings,” they said  
“Find shelter,” they said  
“Find food.” they said  
“Find water,” they said  
And their guns fired  
And their bombs fell

“This is an evacuation order,” they said  
“Go south to Rafah,” they said  
“It is a designated safe area,” they said  
“Take your family,” they said

“Take your belongings,” they said  
“Find shelter,” they said  
“Find food”, they said  
“Find water,” they said  
And their guns fired  
And their bombs fell

“This is an evacuation order,” they said  
“Go north to Khan Yunis,” they said  
“It is a designated safe area,” they said  
“Take your family,” they said  
“Take your belongings,” they said  
“Find shelter,” they said  
“Find food,” they said  
“Find water,” they said  
And their guns fired  
And their bombs fell  
“This is an evacuation order,” they said.  
Their guns fired  
Their bombs fell

*1 August 2024*

*On this day 39,363 Palestinians are reported dead. 90,923 Palestinians are reported injured*

## Bernie Crawford

### Stripped

Always go for the strong image  
the one that stalks the mind  
when the book is closed  
let it do the work, I encourage  
my students

The image haunts me  
all night, wish I hadn't  
watched the news  
but know I've no right  
to the privilege of not knowing

Row upon row  
of men, young and old,  
sitting, in almost prayer pose,  
on ground among the rubble  
in their underpants.

## **Alan Dent**

### **Mowing The Lawn**

If your house is destroyed and your family lies dead  
your babies and grandmothers left where they bled  
if your world is upended and you're lost and forlorn  
it's only the IDF mowing the lawn;

when your nights pass in terror your days in despair  
if you reach for a hand and no one is there  
when death's your best friend and you wish you weren't born  
it's only the IDF mowing the lawn;

when your children are starving you make soup from grass  
not a sole drop of water for your dry mouth, alas,  
when life is all darkness no promise of dawn  
it's only the IDF mowing the lawn;

when the bullets fly wildly and there's nowhere to run  
and the bombs fall at random as the goons have their fun  
and the IDF laugh, sneer, lie back and yawn  
it's only the Zionists mowing the lawn;

and the righteous US as the poor orphans mourn  
runs to help Zionists mowing the lawn.

## Anne Donnellan

### Innocents

Seeing the newborns swaddled in surgical green  
bundled on benches, a litter of abandoned puppies  
armies bombarding the cubicles of the sick, I am drawn again

to peace parades in mudded light of Galway's streets.  
In twos and threes old heads move with dragged feet  
hearts low we know the brutal plots from before,

the dogs that thrive on trade of petroleum and drone.  
In another war I marched with my children on my back  
someone said I should leave the young at home

not be playing the combat game with the innocents.  
In a Gaza hospital soldiers poke the pile of dead children  
rummaging for Kalashnikovs

Death spills out of the mouths of babies  
and sleeping dogs lie with the bald eagle  
I dream of a black sunrise.

## St. Patrick's Day 2024

My dream takes me to the White House  
where Kelly green fountain streams  
spit red globules, ricochet on the pristine lawns.  
Dirty skies sit low, a brazen breeze propels  
smell of sizzling flesh to the Oval Office  
stage where emerald men show cause  
bear not the crystal bowl of shamrock, Mr President  
but a clay jar of sinews stewed in the tears of Gaza.

I wake to the daymare of a festival episode  
stars of our sod line out to stroke your cloak, Mr President  
detonate the oval space with leprechaun lyric.  
Like a gaping silence of Connemara stone  
what remains unsaid  
scars my heart.

## **Annie Egan**

### **I Am Not Writing Another Poem About Palestine**

I am cutting carrots. I am slicing them into extra thin strips. I am slicing them thin because the guinea pig is old and she has lost a tooth. I am not writing a poem about Palestine with the intention of submitting it to Culture Matters. I am not hoping that the editors will read my poem and say ‘How clever—the author is protesting the war in Palestine but also commenting on performative politics and the exploitation of human misery for personal gain.’ No, I am letting the cats in. The wind is high and it is hard to hold the door open long enough for them to enter. They are rescue cats. I rescued them because I am a good person. The cats hate my husband. I am not writing a poem about Palestine. I am not recalling the news last night and how my daughter asked why the Gaza story was the only one in black and white. I am not watching a people turn to dust. No, I am helping my son with his homework while cutting carrots. I am trying to remember Pythagoras’ theorem. I am not thinking about how genocide is just one word. I am not writing a poem about Palestine. No, I am ignoring the fact that when my husband comes in, he does not meet my eye. I am considering the near collapse of our marriage. I am noticing the word ‘near’. It means our marriage is still intact. I am not writing a poem about Palestine. I am not going to be confronted by an image from the Holocaust while researching the poem. I am not an apologist. I am a good person that rescues cats and helps with homework. I am not writing a poem about Palestine because it is easy. I am not writing a poem about Palestine because it is dangerous. I am not writing.



## **Attracta Fahy**

### **The Last of a Nation**

There's the end of it  
prayers unanswered

It ended in betrayal  
They slide down to be buried  
in rubble, safety of dark  
without space for innocence  
heavy hearts struggling for breath  
clawing their way  
where

it isn't a choice letting go  
in time for heartbreak,  
tunnelling through grief

Get on with it  
inhumanity keeps saying, get out

in threat of expulsion, starvation  
and facing other dispossession

came sleepless nights, nightmares  
with drones, bombs, military police  
offering the world's no mercy

If this is humanity, where is the hell  
and they've lived it, and live it.  
I wait with god, a bystander  
who didn't ask to witness such terror  
didn't choose to gaze at horror.

No myth guiding me  
Can Dante but he was a man  
I'm a woman  
So I create my own reclamation myth  
of surviving in conquest of the storm,  
screens teeming atrocity, innocents dead.  
I don't take reality's grey shit anymore.

## Nightmare

night was an endless organ of dust,  
so little light, and no one I knew.  
Bodies grey with ash, fire scalding screams  
from children melting in flames

I can't say if it was smoke, or wings  
from a child out of reach.  
A burning car, no one saved  
there, not there; arms clutched  
helpless what I couldn't touch.

Orange flares lit a pear tree  
near a doorway. Trying to run,  
my tongue pulsing, a thousand tongues screaming  
names  
No one answered

Bags of pulverised flesh;  
air so hot it vapourised  
Over a red sky, shrapnel and gunfire etched  
the faces of children into one syllable.  
No one cared

Hubris rustled along the walls of Medea.  
Shouts of defiance, lewd luscious  
crowd drunk in bloodthirsty lust,  
spew fury in laughter  
cheering at the slaughter

My psyche a country of witness  
trying to get out, to wake up,  
A great anger rises  
shadows scrolling death over my screen  
my bed drenched with sweat.  
But not for the dead—  
for the living



## Neil Fawcett

### Falcons Shit on High Winds

A boy with bread in his basket cycles home.  
Crunches an apple between his teeth  
it's tartness makes his eyes wince.

He hears the high-pitched whine  
of metal slicing through air.  
Curious, unaware.

A stunned woman stands  
in clouds of settling dust  
cups her belly,

sees a garbage pile of coloured clothes,  
apple rolls through blood,  
the slow revolution of a warped wheel

womb on fire.

## Farmers ن ع ر ا ز م ل ا

(We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children.)

Arable land blows away with the wind  
when soil, once weighed down with water, dries.  
Crust crumbled to dust lifts to blind  
eyes, mute suns, stain skies.

Heads removed from necks are cognisant  
for fifteen seconds; enough time to see  
their blood fountain, freed from resistance,  
coagulate the sun with living screed.

Farmers watch dust plumes trail tyres,  
and silent plane shadows, race to share  
cargos that fuel, sun-sized pyres;  
sowing seeds, growing smoke in the air.

A roof rips off and light is death.  
A father's head sees his boy's arm in flight  
his girl's legs wheel, before his final breath;  
her intestines trail like the tails of a kite.

(Above this steaming tangle the sky glints.)

# Naomi Foyle

## Supernova

*for Gaza | i.m. Shani Louk*

On a road leading out of the festival,  
a soldier found the shard of a skull—

a fragment of the petrous part  
of the temporal bone

that once sheltered  
the carotid artery,  
acoustic labyrinth  
and dreams  
of a birthday girl peacenik

it lodges in my chest—

pins that photo, Shani,  
of your limp body  
under the heel of the gunmen  
to the walls of my heart

where around every corner  
boys scatter  
like sparrows  
from thunder

inch back to their fathers  
at work in the rubble

weeping sweat, praising Allah,  
as with raw grey hands  
they tenderly lift

red wet chunks  
of sisters, brothers, mothers,  
uncles, grandparents  
into plastic bags  
from a bakery  
now ground to dust

## **Striver**

*i.m. Mujahid*

Your struggles are over, Mujahid.  
Your solemn face still  
on my timeline—  
    those large dark eyes  
    beholding me  
    over the picture you drew  
    for your oncology team—  
        a crayoned boy  
        with a beaming smile  
        bald head sprouting three new hairs  
        a careful flower in his hand.

In that other photo  
your doctor posted  
I don't know  
which in the row of eight white-shrouded corpses is yours.

\*

I was grateful too, to be cured of cancer.  
Though the glow has worn off.  
If I must live,  
I will try to live

with my failures, Mujahid,  
and up to your dreams.

\*

Today I stood in the rain  
helping to hold  
a list of children's names—  
a long white scroll  
floating  
from the Houses of Parliament  
past Victoria Tower Gardens

no end in sight.

## **Nowhere is it written love must fail**

*i.m.Refaat Alareer*

*After Ali Abu Awwad and Ami Dar*

Morgues tortured with corpses, an army  
sets out to annihilate darkness  
by the light of white fire, the lamp of bombs  
signed by children with hearts and stars.

A boy tugs on his brother as witness  
*I'm dying of hunger Help us, world*  
then stops, turns away his drained face  
saying he knows there's no world any more.

Cats eat sniped bodies. Bombed sewers breed disease.  
Teens in costume hijabs and eyeshadow bruises  
cackle into cameras, raid fridges, blast showers



gleefully flick electricity switches.

Captives shiver. Stripped flesh is digital currency. Lingerie loot.  
A soldier grins—tugs on a bra strap twisted into barbed wire.  
Black lace ghosts, silk souls, expose his pose.

Here, a university, silent all autumn, at last allows a silent vigil.  
Because silence is all we now have in common.

Elsewhere, people march, cry justice, peace, freedom  
lie on the road wrapped in shrouds and keffiyehs  
light Hanukkah candles in Ceasefire menorahs  
write on white kites, the death of a poet a tale  
to be told in every tongue.

Here and there, more and more  
brave people build bridges  
out of breached fences

meet over the abyss

look, not down

but at each other

## Sam Friedman

### Ode to an encampment

Here, in a long-stolen homeland,  
in a country insecure, paranoid, and  
    empty,  
supplier of smart bombs, dumb  
bombs, soundbites so inane they clearly embody  
the essence of those at the top:  
    empty.

Here, at the heart of complicity,  
at a university whose dollar-seeking rules  
demand obedience and indifference to others'  
    destruction,  
you students,  
you staff,  
you faculty,  
Palestinian, Jewish, and other,  
have the gall,  
the chutzpah,  
to say  
NO!,  
to dare to  
    care.

I sit with you, see your willingness  
to defy arrests, teargas, and violent cops,  
see you cram for exams in the off times,  
hear you talk strategy, wisdom, and virtue  
in a country of amoral  
    rot-at-the-top.

I watch a video where one of you  
chastises the Board of Governors,  
calmly,  
logically,  
wisely

telling these empty yes-men to  
    fuck off,  
perfect  
evidence  
that despite Biden's, DeSantis's, and Greenblatt's  
    lies,  
our encampments are full of wisdom,  
full of love,  
full of morality,  
as they expose the amoral cruelty  
of those who batter students here  
while Gaza  
    dies.

### **Civics lesson for moral jurors**

What is a cop?  
Someone serving time 'til retirement,  
well trained in lying  
since gun-toting officers  
stand at their backs.

And what is evidence?  
Fingerprints, DNA and all that jazz  
get collected, processed,  
by time-serving liars, too,  
and lab techs get ahead  
by going along  
with the liars in blue.

And who is that judge,  
majestic before you?  
An ambitious liar  
in fancy garb,  
as she praises a Constitution

enacted by rich white men  
who profited off the slavery of “others” with darker skin.

And the laws she asks you to empower  
by convicting someone like me or like you?  
They were passed in decades of Jim Crow,  
voter suppression, Ku Klux lynchings,  
when hired goons repressed workers’ voices and women’s bodies,  
as they still do.

### **From every river to every sea**

A land  
with  
a people  
coveted  
by another.  
A horn blows.

Hospital walls come  
tumbling down.

Children and adults,  
if lucky, flee.

Elderly people,  
people just like me,  
watch in fear.

Gaza?  
West Bank?  
Ukraine?  
Rojava?

Every people  
must be free.

## Declan Geraghty

### Kids don't see flags

Kids don't see flags  
they see colours  
and shapes  
and bunting  
and sails for ships  
or covers for a tent,  
and when the bombs drop  
and the men come shouting  
and punching  
kicking and shooting  
at our homes  
kids don't see flags  
they just see bandages  
and blankets  
a hiding place  
or something to take comfort in.

## Priya K. Gill

### Gauze

Wrapped inside me is a school of closed  
eyes getting far too comfortable—  
surgically removed—being tossed into me  
by a suited shadow—rhythmically, as if  
they're just the counters from an abacus,

                  somewhere  
inside me, the parent eyes  
                  jolt up  
scouring left and right across  
the West Bank of my  
cave-structured-skeletal heart  
                  redoing my sight  
                  redoing my memory of sight

rerooting my blood  
and boiling it  
distilling the debris  
wrapping me in a gauze  
with a stern reminder  
that humans were  
made to love.

## Abigail George

### From the point of view of the lake of tears

Palestine bleeds  
The Jungian moon  
Gaping hole  
where a heart should be  
Kitty Hawk's maturity  
Up in the air  
Bomb  
Air strike  
The bomb falls  
lands nowhere  
lands everywhere  
Blood inside  
Now outside  
Bloodstained clothes  
The human stain  
Wait for the darling emphasis  
Controversy  
in the brain's psychology  
Limbs have instinct  
The body has no head  
No arms  
No legs  
They've turned into branches  
The walking dead  
War has become a television show  
They want more violence  
More death  
More dead bodies  
More screams  
Watch them branch out  
Belief has an axiom-will  
I spent an afternoon reading

Ajise Vincent's poetry on the recommendation  
of a friend. Rainclouds gather, hunger,  
bell, this grape, wrath, this glass of pale  
milk  
These don't exist  
in a ghost world  
People marry  
They get on  
with their lives  
which reminds me  
I have poems to write  
I too must get on  
with the act of living.

### **Mandela said so**

Mandela loved children.  
You've all seen the images.  
Go to the internet. Be witness  
at his birthday parties. My  
heart takes flight on the  
odour of death. I have  
spoken about this before.  
Question/s: in war, what  
comes after the wildfire, what  
happens to the children, to  
the laughter. What happens  
when the concrete jungle is  
no more. When the river is  
sticky, bloody and ancient, when

it turns to dust, to liquid, to  
masala, to alien fluid and when  
that is no more, what happens  
to the surface, to the aorta, to the sea



When the wave is is no more  
silence descends, creeps into  
the city, every terrain, the dark, the light  
This morning as the dark turns  
into light I listen to the milky sweetness  
of the poetry of Ari Sitas on a  
poetry show called The Red  
Wheelbarrow. Poetry devours  
the light in much the same  
way an airstrike in Gaza wipes  
out entire families. Ari Sitas  
says he went into a 'mad period'.  
Oh, how I know all about  
that. I think his poems are genius,  
a tender slaughterhouse.

## **The sea**

Does this sea have a  
dendrite, is it made of  
serotonin? Do endorphins  
run through the tears  
of children? Does this  
sea only know of storms,  
this planet aligning itself  
with the dying, with cranial  
pain. I think of the word,  
'gland'. It is master. It is  
cell. It holds me prisoner.  
I think of two more words  
in inverted commas, the  
sweetness of honey and  
milk found in 'blood spilled'  
or is it 'spilled blood'  
What intimate knowledge

of rich vein and blood does  
this sea have of war crimes,

what kind of birds fly over  
this sea, do mental birds  
live in mental cages? This  
sea is as bold as Ari Sitas'  
voice. Every poet has words  
and even the complex design  
of those words have the courage  
of smoke that silences, the  
power of bone and flesh  
that grapples and crushes  
the outsider. I am an outsider.

I turn into a wave in the  
sea's embrace. The blood is  
warm and rich. It flows. It  
has never stopped flowing  
for years and years and years.  
Perhaps one day, after thousands  
of years, perhaps trees will  
grow out of this sea.

## Peter Godfrey

### Compañero

*in memory of Eric Levy*

Assange is free—and how you worked  
for that, fragile as spindrift, drumming  
up a storm wrapped in your *keffiyeh*,  
that badge of honour loose around  
your neck and freckled black and white,  
waylaying drivers with your flimsy  
leaves of truth and digging in for justice.

Not the faceless walls of Belmarsh or  
scales of the Old Bailey could hold you,  
hem you in, as you climbed up the bare  
staircase to your council flat—*‘I don’t  
believe in property’*—sifting the thought  
of Marx and Mao, a sea shanty—the song  
of workers deep within your throat.

Nine decades on the picket line with  
Robeson and Joe Hill willing an end to  
lairds and labourers, the magnate and  
his drones, quite clear that flunkeys  
went out with the Romanovs—we must look  
eye to eye. No ownership of vast estates,  
bequests of daddy’s pile, but an arm

around our neighbour to reach higher  
and bestow the spoils. We’ll have no truck  
with hunger, will lift up the downtrodden—  
every person’s sweat a treasure to be mined—  
and make a land where each flower may  
still bloom. Where friendship bursts forth  
like a spring—we’ll call it Palestine.

## Tyrant

Never have we seen one quite like this,  
Empty of respect or feeling, King Disdain,  
Terror his watchword, bombs his calling card,  
Antipathy towards those of different faiths.  
No god or devil could have dreamed him up  
Yet here he is, a human wrecking-ball  
Adamant Gaza's made rubble, Palestinians too.  
Hubris will fell him, stop his sorry project dead,  
Unveil delusions there are lesser beings (I speak as a Jew).



## Simon Haines

### Solutions

Clammy my palms  
and damp my eye,  
tight my throat  
and soft my cry.  
I realise gradually,  
sadly, madly  
that it only works  
if none survive  
to continue the race  
and remain alive.  
It still progresses  
north and south,  
survivors living  
hand to mouth,  
affirming  
their future evolution  
cheating  
the others' final solution.

Though tight their throat  
and soft their cry,  
they steadfastly refuse to die.

## Garden Walls

Surround garden walls  
shield from worlds  
to grow flower meadows and vegetables  
wholesomely in rich soil.

But no protection from sniper fire  
nor deafening kettled screams  
nor whimpering newly orphaned  
nor whistling shells  
nor grumbling rumbling tanks  
whose diesel fumes attack lungs  
nor reeking flesh from bombsite homes  
nor boasting bully oppressors.

We hide behind porous walls  
toiling Monday to Friday  
gardening Saturday  
churching Sunday.

## **A. H. Fitzwilliam Hall**

### **For Refaat Alareer**

*Assassinated December 7th 2023. Gaza.*

Though loved by his students and highly respected,  
outside his homeland he was not widely read.  
In truth he was almost unknown.  
However, the occupying forces deemed his poetry dangerous,  
for it spoke of resistance and resilience,  
of freedom and hope for the Palestinian cause.  
This was not what they wanted the people to hear.  
So they dropped a smart bomb on his family apartment,  
a targeted strike,  
and poet and poems alike  
were blown sky high  
into the night,  
and his words were lofted like sparks into heaven  
and jet streams disseminated them all round the world  
where they fluttered down gently like migrating birds,  
singing in various tongues.  
Now Refaat's poems are everywhere told,  
speaking of resistance and resilience  
and freedom and hope  
for the Palestinian people.

## Gaza Once Green

The rainy grey of a winter sky.  
The murky grey Mediterranean,  
lapping a gritty grey shore.  
The grey of rubble-strewn streets.  
The grey of smashed buildings,  
grey innards exposed.  
The grey-grim faces,  
and grimy grey clothes,  
cloaked in grey dust,  
with only grey water to wash.  
And through the grey world of Gaza  
we see here and there,  
everywhere now, as if floating on air,  
shining white parcels  
carefully wrapped,  
flitted along, or lifted aloft,  
or huddled like migrating doves  
in lines on the ground.  
Blazing white lights in the grey.  
The white hurts my eyes.

## Everyone

In Gaza  
Everyone a witness  
Everyone a first responder  
Everyone a rubble digger  
Everyone a stretcher bearer  
Everyone an A & E assistant nurse  
Everyone a body washer  
Everyone a pall-bearer  
Everyone a gravedigger  
Everyone a mourner  
Everyone a target  
Everyone a *shaheed*.



## John G. Hall

### The Parsley Picker

the parsley picking  
Palestinian filled

his insurgent basket  
one too many times

green fingers seen as  
blood stained weapons

and dangerous devices  
harvesting knife devilish

held obviously undercover  
mischievously he works his

ancient land for the sun discs  
free gift of pungent existence

the tank commander was not  
fooled by herbal camouflage

tossed a killing round to field  
the parsley terrorist dropped

to his knees a human being  
cropped by racist shears.

## **Bible Bullied**

the sea of Galilee  
was not impressed

neither was the mount  
or the useless tomb of

Lazarus and the man  
made tree of Calvary  
refused to blossom

the Red Sea resealed  
and the forty years  
in the desert wasted

while the tribe of Palestine  
lie enslaved by a new pharaoh

stoned to death by the rubble  
of ignored commandments

Yahweh offered state murder  
turning God back into Moloch.

## Janet Hatherley

### Ghazal: no surviving family

It's a new acronym, the medic says,  
*WCNSF. Wounded child, no surviving family.*

The three-year-old in her rescuer's arms, chatters,  
glances at the sky, eyes wild, no surviving family.

One orange a day from their only tree,  
no other food, no stockpiles. No surviving family.

People leaving, a second Nakba.  
Once more exiled, no surviving family.

Gaza's a prison between land, sea and desert,  
it's apartheid. No surviving family.

*I'm twenty-four*, the journalist said, *never let out  
of Gaza, never seen a mountainside.* No surviving family.

Hospitals collapsed weeks ago,  
everywhere bodies piled, no surviving family.

It's been seventy-five years, the Palestinian said.  
*Time up*, the West replied, no surviving family.

Israel has a right to defend itself, it says.  
The world's been lied to, no surviving family.

*Drive them out* the settler calls,  
a Zionist brainchild, no surviving family.

*We didn't do anything wrong, we didn't do anything wrong,*  
a greatgrandchild and no surviving family.

## **If Jesus came again she'd be born a Palestinian**

toddle amongst the grass roots  
of her people.

Like them her existence  
would not be recognised

by the western world.  
Israel wants them either dead

or gone.  
White stars would rain on her

from the night sky like fireworks  
but these would be phosphorous.

The heavy bombs built to drop  
on armoured vehicles

would fall  
and the walls of her bedroom

would crumble. She would lie  
under the rubble of many homes

for many days  
or she would be found.

On another night without anaesthetic  
her legs would be amputated.

She would face years of pain.  
Finally, she would grow to be a leader

for all the peoples—  
equality spilling from her hands, like seeds.

## Removing the butterfly

before Khaled gave Reem up  
to those whose job it was  
to enfold her in white plastic

he gently took  
from her ear  
the only earring left

removed the butterfly  
from the back of her ear lobe  
to release the gold stud

pierced it through  
the pocket of his shirt  
near his heart

*Reem was three years old when she was killed by an Israeli airstrike in Gaza on 29th November 2023. Her grandfather Khaled called her 'the soul of my soul'. He was killed by the Israelis on 16th December 2024.*

## Lynne Hewitt-Martin

### There's nothing

Nothing to see here.

Here,

Western eyes are averted

From what we will

Not

See.

Nothing to see here.

Here,

Broken babies,

Bodies

Are shrugged off; collateral

Damage.

Nothing to see here.

Here,

Bombs bludgeon,

Homes

Are hammered, blown into

Dust.

Nothing to see here.

Here,

Israel has no shame,

No soul

Shame, compassion. It's all

Gone.

Nothing to see here.

For the waters of Palestine

Do not flow free.

Captured by Israel, you see.

Cruelty and oppression  
Have many disguises.

So Nothing to see here.  
Here.  
Between the river  
And the sea,  
Who was here?  
And who deserves  
To be?



## Kevin Higgins

### Temple of Electricity

*after Enrique Linh*

Your wages are mine  
and so, if I want it, is your father's life  
and your little son's  
little life and your daughter's  
but I let you go free  
as long as you say  
anything  
apart from having done that  
and seen it twist out this way  
we won't be doing it again.

Because we will.  
I have already ironed  
our light grey uniforms.

What we do  
will gain its electricity  
from us knowing how  
it turns out.

This time can take bets  
on where the blood spatters  
might land.



## Jack Houston

### more more more

tube wheel screech against rail an  
advert for pants star  
signs on the freesheet's verso  
page the reviewed holiday  
resort restaurant new gizmo some

latest play five-  
star worthy so worth ignoring  
those snuffed today  
each day every day  
who can keep count of the thousands

now just mournful bundles ready  
for disposal more  
more  
more every moment tick tock  
tick fold the evening

standard leave its  
ads on the seat the  
escalator slowly  
lifting me home one person in  
front another behind

## Mike Huett

### Gaza

Bucket and spade, child and sand  
Bucket and spade, and sand

### Hind

*This poem is a response to Forensic Architecture's work on the murder of Hind Rajab by the IDF.*

Hind's car was shot hundreds of times;  
as if one bullet was not enough?  
From war crime nothing good comes  
for sure, bar less bullets remain to kill  
hundreds more; little daughters,  
little sons

## Anne Irwin

### Words

If the undead populated the world  
would there be no poetry  
no blue stream binding words  
no soft flow of dreams  
connecting.

Would words be hollow  
unable to capture the twist and turns  
of experience.  
Would words only justify intent.

Could the undead commandeer  
human land and homes  
could they justify by saying  
we're fighting human animals  
let's see how they survive  
without fuel, electricity or food.  
they'll get what they deserve.

if the undead bombed human cities  
watched the buildings crumble  
mothers and babies crying in the rubble,  
famine spreading  
and then called it self defense  
would we as humans accept their story?

That is not what it is to be human.  
Would we not reach deep into the cauldron  
of our experience  
and haul those words from the underworld to the surface  
because our hearts revolts against the corruption of words

Our heart seeks truth in words.

## Slow and Steady Wins the Race

Gather from the gutter  
ye outsiders and ruffians  
we'll fatten you on ideologies  
blood you for battle  
prepare you for war.

Send you to hill tops, knolls and hillocks.  
to stake out your promised domain  
we'll give you the land, subsidise your houses  
with umbilical roads leading west to our homeland  
we'll make you powerful with assault rifles and guns .

Intimidate the land owners  
by stalking their children  
pointing guns at the four-year-olds going to school  
growl obscenities at everyone passing by you  
burn olive groves, ransack homes.

A phone call away there's an army that's ready  
to help if landowners begin to react  
that's your call to action, the excuse is protection.  
to justify ravaging homes,  
killing families, children, neighbors  
laying claim to this holy land so pure, so glorious  
Remember it is yours by the right of your birth.

But be wary of international watchers and monitors  
keep it low key to test the heat.  
Don't embarrass the US your godfather, your protector  
they're lining our pockets with billions a year  
to annex the West Bank to our promised land.

Remember the US has their agenda.  
Slow and steady wins the race.

## Jodie Jegasothy

### Was it just a dream

Was it just a dream,  
The crashing and the banging,  
The sirens and the screams,  
The helplessness and fear,  
Those I love now distant,  
Only yesterday so near,  
Memories flood my mind,  
I'm dancing once again,  
Thinking of my family to help relieve my pain,  
The place we called home,  
Dysfunctional, at a loss,  
Taken in a heartbeat,  
My heart is shattered,  
I'm beyond saddened and angry,  
Every breath I take is painful,  
Like a weight upon my chest,  
My eyes can't process  
This hell forsaken mess,  
My legs are weightless,  
My arms are stiff,  
My hope is diminishing,  
My prayers are wearing thin,  
I close my eyes just one more time and make a desperate wish,  
I look up into the distance,  
What is this shadow I see appearing in the mist,  
The fog is lifting, the sun begins to shine,  
The shadows getting closer and it's clear to me I see,  
My loved ones making their way through the rubble reaching out their hand,  
I use all my strength within as I slowly begin to stand,  
We use our strength together, we reunite once again,  
We look at one another and in joy begin to beam,  
That was when it became all clear  
That it wasn't just a dream.

## Mike Jenkins

### Samih Sings

A city of tents,  
No safety in the 'Safe Zone'.

Samih plays his oud:  
It's his eyes and mouth.

No blot or stain on its wood.  
Tents like bedraggled flags,

Like bloodied rags,  
A clothes-line roof.

Samih with audience of other kids,  
His stage a rickety chair.

His voice prays, praises, keens,  
His fingers find an escape.

He sings a path, long journey,  
A dangerous trek back.

He sings all the families  
Waiting hungry for the big trucks.

He sings the broken cities,  
Lost homes and buried sounds.

## **Palm Reaching**

A palm reaches out from the rubble  
From a home become a graveyard  
But every stone broken to shards—  
A single dust-smear'd hand  
Searching up for the sunlight  
A shoot, a sapling—  
Like a child's from Pantglas  
Where the rescuers dug with care .  
Fingers' tendrils still moving  
Trying to write signals in choking air—  
While the men used bare hands to dig  
Interpreting the script of saving  
Even as it was being erased.

Would it grow here  
Into a small tree, a flower—  
An olive tree to one day bear fruit,  
A poppy of red, black and green  
To wave in the wind?

## A Sign

57 standing ovations  
For the oppressor-man.  
355 shots into the car  
Where Hind huddled, pleading.  
Some facts hit home  
Like the hard punch  
Of the morning alarm,  
When you face what's happening  
As everything has changed.

Even in the sun  
And the peace of the street at dawn,  
Even across the wild Waun  
Grown bearded and long,  
The blood of those Palestinians  
Burns behind your eyes.

Numbers are a stark sign  
Pointing to fires and smoke,  
To horrors of every waking.



## Gerald Kells

### Blue Sky Thinking

*Al-Jazeera News Report*

there's a boy in Gaza  
who started to fly kites  
and all the others followed—

he isn't the hero of a book  
or a film, or discussed  
in high literary circles,

he doesn't have a dad  
or a house, just a hill  
of dust above a sea of tents,

there he flies his kite  
and others follow  
despite the risk that  
their safe place will shatter—

I think that boy  
is the best in the world  
and when his short  
moment on TV is over

that sky will embrace  
his undamaged kite

## Footsteps of Jesus

*Following the footsteps of Jesus: Biblical Sites You Can Still Visit—  
StarsInsider Website*

so there you have it,  
a list of sites you can  
still visit where Jesus went—

looks like Bethlehem's out  
and Gaza—maybe not Jerusalem  
if you look like Jesus did,  
Palestinian—

the thing is I don't  
want to go where Jesus went,  
I'd rather do what he did:

love my neighbour,  
turn the other cheek,  
give to the poor,  
heal the sick,

oh, and raise the dead,  
except that these days  
that's a long list,

25,000 and counting  
in some places—

all I'm saying is that  
following in someone's footprints  
is usually a metaphor  
not a fact

and even if were a fact  
the metaphor still counts—

wouldn't it be better  
to identify a list of sites  
to stop bombing?

maybe we could start  
with the ones where Jesus went

## **Spokesperson**

there are things you cannot say  
like, we killed those children,  
there are things you cannot show  
like photos of those children's bodies,  
there are things you cannot admit  
like, we want those children dead,  
and things you cannot accept  
like, those children deserved to live

## Lisa Kelly

### The Present

is very hard to determine  
with any of our senses.  
I am trying to live in its abstract noun—  
a gift as the old joke goes,  
but unwrapping  
the sound of more bombs,  
the rotting under rubble,  
the bitter taste of politicians' hypocrisy,  
the sights of abject horror  
touched upon in news reports  
make the past or future, abstract nouns  
we might live in more easily.

I have put up the Christmas tree.  
I have draped it in fairy lights,  
and dangled it with decorations  
my children made when they were children.

I like to think that everyone has a past  
that can make it to the future.  
Underneath the tree, not one present—  
just fallen pine needles.

## what if war were measured in baby teeth

the kiloton of bombs  
dropped in baby teeth  
the incendiary grief of lives  
lost in baby teeth

all those little enamel  
baby teeth so pearly  
like the gates of heaven  
dropping out of mouths

of planes raining down  
baby teeth homes destroyed  
by baby teeth a child hit by  
a precision-guided baby tooth

tooth fairies flying late  
in the night to the bedsides  
of collateral damage leaving  
coins under pillows

obols under tongues  
in exchange for baby teeth  
silver caskets for baby teeth  
for mothers to remember

all the baby teeth stacking  
up into cairns  
how many baby teeth  
it took to negotiate

a diplomatic solution  
the treaty of baby teeth  
reparations for  
teething symptoms

sore gums flushed cheeks  
rubbing ears dribbling  
and drooling towards  
a binding gappy-toothed

smile all signatories agree  
to be photographed with  
the bloody making way  
for adult teeth to erupt



## Tim Kiely

### *from this calls for care*

*'Before we proceed  
let us complete an exercise  
in critical feeling'*

—Oksana Maksymchuk

i

a dream in which you witness / an olive tree being evicted in Palestine /  
it says

the branches grow out of me like arms  
they shake in the wind my blown fruit

reaches out for the ground like fingers  
already leathered with callouses

my toppled trunk groans          a blasted ribcage  
making its way to the ground          my bark

breaks open very much like skin  
my leaves are ripped away like tears

going up          almost exactly          like a cry  
in the blood-soaked earth my roots

are on fire with themselves          they clutch  
the dearest element near

long for water  
make ready to

be once more raked through  
kicking and screaming

this calls for wisdom

iv

I think it was James Joyce who said / that history is a nightmare from which  
/ we are trying to wake

being an Irish Catholic / this speaks to me

a desiccated patriarch staggered / out of hell with a Molotov cocktail /  
clutched in its fist and ready to bowl / the past into the present again

then stand back and watch the flames

vi

a present in which you are / led out to the killing ground via smartphone

and told that you must not look away  
as one you look the condemned shuffle out

their t-shirts and uniforms stirring slightly  
on thin limbs they all pass within grabbing

distance you are told that you must not  
look away it is hot a piss smell rises

the executioners present arms in a tinny  
apology of rifle bolts

you do not look away the rifles clear  
their throats cough staccato the wall behind



the heads of the condemned sneezes concrete  
the condemned throw up their arms in a shrug

you are told that you must not look away  
someone says *"I have a loaf of bread in the oven"*

another *"my friend has just died"* *"I have  
a dental appointment"*; you are told

that you must not look away their remains  
are within touching distance

you look and look and  
look and look and look

x

in the times when it feels like the world / the whole entire world / is a  
slaughterhouse it is important to remember / that this is not the case and that  
is the problem

it certainly doesn't help that some of the corners / which I call home can be  
paradise / while others are still smoking from the latest / ultimatum dropped  
onto those / whose ashes are like the sand of the shore

into the eye of a bomb blast / you look and look and look and look

I tell myself I am not involved / except in the way that all of us are

I am trying to cross a bridge a very / narrow bridge without pitching over / and  
taking who knows how many / dogs cats children pedestrians / stood together  
with me / into the abyss

I think it was the Prophet Muhammad who said / absolutely nothing only took  
out a knife / and cut out a piece of his robe so as not / to disturb a cat and  
her kittens / who let a stray dog drink water from his shoe / for which he was

forgiven all his sins

I may have misremembered and yet

xii

once upon a time I wrote / that sleep would come and it would be defeat / I  
told myself 'stay angry' I never / understood how precise is the price / exacted  
by anger measured out to the inch / to the mile to the house to the town to the  
body / when it just

doesn't stop coming

I think it was Desmond Tutu who said / that to remember everything is a form  
of madness

with the faithful and the faithless / with my feet I keep praying / towards the  
place where everything // stops

the place where point and counterpoint / must both surrender to exhaustion /  
where everyone becomes one who submits / to what exactly is unclear / only that  
it awaits us darkly / behind these blinks of an eyelid

I think it was W.H. Auden who said / that god is never finished he is only / given  
up on

xvi

a future in which

a death is a death

and each one is marked as it passes through us  
a crime is a crime and none go unrecorded  
we lay no coins on the eyelids of the dead  
to keep them closed we make our poems  
dry and moral we count our steps  
we hope that when we are brought before

the all-seeing horizon and weighed in the balance  
we are not found wanting where history takes  
no hostages and the land is promised  
to none but the people who live on it  
where justice comes down like grains of sand  
making vast untrampled dunes of the real  
beneath an unmarked sky                      in which



## **Phil Knight**

### **We Are The Other**

We are the dispossessed,  
We are the plank in your eye,  
We are the ashes in your mouth  
And the thorn in your side.

We are the broken the beaten  
And the blown to bits.  
We are the forgotten.  
We are the collaterally damaged.

We are the wretched of the Earth.  
We are notes in a dossier.  
We are the over looked.  
We are Human.

We are the other  
And we are you.

## Children Of Gaza

In Gaza, children dream of limbs,  
of running through fields,  
or of being able to catch a ball.  
But they have been robbed.

Their future stolen by bombs and drones,  
robbed of arms and legs by a superpower  
taking an eye for an eye  
to make the youth of a nation blind.

They destroy a whole skyscraper,  
a city block, a hospital, a school,  
an entire nation if they have to,  
just to kill a handful of enemies.  
Better a dozen, no, a hundred,  
no, better make that a thousand  
innocents die, than let one  
guilty man continue to draw air.

The children suffer and the governments  
of Britain and America languish in silence—  
the silence of complacency,  
the silence of accessory to murder.

If the leaders of the "Free World"  
have nothing to say about the genocide  
of children, then they have nothing  
worth hearing by us, who care.

## Rock

Oh my dead Dear,  
Beautiful Daughter of Gaza.  
It is so unfair to see you  
dead in the dirt because  
you are a Palestinian.

What is that?  
You clutch in your hand?  
It is not an atom bomb,  
or a RPG. It is certainly  
not a high magnitude  
sniper's rifle.

It is a stone.  
Far smaller than the rock  
of Gibraltar.  
It is bigger than a pebble,  
but not as big as the speck  
in the eye of your brother  
which hid your humanity.

Swords can be turned  
into ploughshares  
and rocks can be used  
to build houses.  
However there seems  
little alternative utility  
to atom bombs  
and bullets in the head.

## **Paul Laughlin**

### **Colony**

In the colony  
Words are also  
Warped by war  
And language will  
Lay siege to truth  
Essential voices  
Are thus submerged  
In the echo of  
Empire's enduring lies

### **Spectacle**

Children keep dying in our living room  
And the spectacle can be upsetting  
What resilience we possess to resume  
Nonetheless seeing unseeing then forgetting

### **Question Authority**

Between the promise  
And the desolation  
Deceit parades as hope  
Words become treacherous  
And convenient lies  
Serve in place of truth

## Neil Laurenson

### Gaza

In the last few weeks  
I have seen  
a father holding the stump of his daughter's severed leg,  
her foot in slices in a plastic bag.

I have seen  
a boy shot in the head,  
his helpless friend only quick enough  
to see the seeping blood.

I have seen a scared toddler  
shaking as if a bomb  
is repeatedly exploding  
inside his tiny heart.

I have seen a before and after:  
a smiling girl  
and a smattering  
of flesh and bones and dusty organs.

I have seen arms sticking out from underneath buildings  
I have seen piles of bodies  
I have seen rows of faces frozen in pain  
I have seen a crying man cradle rubble



## Heart Failure

A 16-year-old boy  
with crushed legs,  
a severed left hand  
and severe injuries to his body.

As we began the urgent surgery  
we were horrified  
to find  
the shattered head  
of another person  
among the bones  
of his legs—  
recognised only by the mouth and chin.

It was a scene beyond  
what the heart can endure.  
It was beyond  
what the heart can endure.  
It was beyond  
what the heart  
can endure.

*This is an almost verbatim tweet by Dr Fadel Naim written on 10th August 2024.  
He had been treating casualties of the Israeli bombing of Al-Tabeen School in Gaza.  
More than 100 people were killed.*

## **Ice Cream**

The back of the child's head  
has been scooped out  
clean as ice cream.  
You can see the top of the spine.

The face is still intact.  
A sleeping child's face.  
From the front you would never know  
of the terror behind.

*There's no blood!*  
*It's fake!*  
*Look at the skin,*  
*it's plastic!*

They are so proud of their heads  
bursting with brains,  
apparently unconcerned that  
their hearts are missing.

## **Breach of the Peace**

Orchestrating a genocide  
is allowed.

Opposing a genocide  
aloud  
is not allowed.

## James Lawton

### The Song of Ariel & Mustafa

In a sun-soaked village, in some distant land,  
Two boys play noughts and crosses in the sand.  
Using sticks, they draw their borders and signs  
But Ariel throws tantrums, kicks up dusty lines

And runs to his father, salty tears in his eyes,  
Who just shrugs, as always, ignores the child's cries.  
Meanwhile, Mustafa, fostered when very young  
Stands alone, forgotten, bites his bloody tongue.

The boys' father, Arthur, heaves into his chair,  
Dreams his golden past - Ari's mother's dark hair,  
That lusty night, his wrath, her flesh in his palm —  
Mustafa, dark eyed, knowing, tugs at dad's arm

To tell him Ariel kicked sand in his face,  
"Boys will be boys", the pale father says.  
Ignored, invisible, Mustafa shoulders our shame:  
*The father's to blame, the father's to blame.*

### Diplomacy

My three year old likes building bricks;  
he doesn't like watching the news.  
This morning, Fathers' Day, he picked  
of all things, to build, to raise

"a house for poor people" —he doesn't know  
the words 'refugee camp'. Yet. His eyes  
aren't on Rafah. Lucky kid. Also

he made trucks, bringing aid to those  
less fortunate than himself. So simple  
to roll unreal trucks in, drop off the bricks  
and build a home for those plastic people.  
Five minutes later, I noticed, stomach-sick

that my boy had smashed up, destroyed  
their home with a toy rocket. In conflicts,  
men play with lives like children with toys  
while kids, who should play, die under bricks

## **Tonight**

*For the fathers of Palestine*

I made a den out of pillows  
and blankets for my boy, my son,  
turned off the big light,  
turned his toy torch on.

We crawled in together  
before he touched my head  
and chattered about something —  
I wasn't listening. Instead,

I was thinking about those  
fathers in Gaza, living in dens,  
their torchlights blinking,  
their dark with no end

but above us, no bombs, no fight.  
*Right, tidy-up time.* I switched on the light.

## Gerard Lee

### We Send Love

We march  
Sending love  
And the slaughter goes on.

We send love and march with defiant fists  
Protesting with your proud flags  
In hope and  
Despair.

We send love  
They send bombs  
And the slaughter goes on.

There are rumours of talks about  
Talks about  
Talks  
About a possible ceasefire.

Yes  
Once everyone is dead.

We march and send love  
And the slaughter goes on.

There's applause coming from a room somewhere.  
Applause?

Yes.

As horrifying as bombs the sound  
Rains down from the chamber  
Of the land of the free.

Your land is not free,  
But there's this grotesque applause  
For deals to be done,  
Every clap another vote in the bag.

They clap votes and do deals  
While you pick up the pieces

Of your lost children.

We send love  
And the slaughter goes on.

We march and protest, send love and raise flags, flags and defiant fists,  
Shouting and chanting and protesting  
We march  
We march  
And the slaughter  
The slaughter  
Goes on.

We share videos of weeping that will never end  
Tagged with our broken heart emojis.  
They send bombs  
And the slaughter goes on.

And we send love  
And  
We send love  
And  
We send love

## Annie Logan

### No Colour at Christmas

Coal black calls on brilliant white.  
A crack in the steel grey spews hellfire,  
A monochromatic morning,  
Feelings of grey, black, white this winter.  
A muddy mixture of the mundane and monotonous,  
topped with an overdose of live-streamed real-life horror.  
Muted, muddy feelings.  
Still sharp when I meet their edges ... but less.  
Less midnight dancing on brilliant white blankets.  
More jet-black ravens coating crystalline snows, scarlet droplets of blood  
falling from their broken beaks.  
Blood that was sourced from my own aorta,  
though now spews from another's wound.  
Less coal black corvids carolling on snow sprinkled rooftops.  
More corvid-like outlines cutting through canvas sheets of brilliant white,  
Erupting in deadly brilliance.  
More blood ... red.

Colour draining from souls  
leaving behind false, shadowy suggestions.

Less red, green, black paper chains and tinsel.  
More red, green, black flags.

Fading.  
Fluttering.  
More screaming scarlet drops of blood in silver snow.  
More devilish ravens calling on death to descend.  
Calling on him to walk again  
upon the land of sand  
and sea  
and olives.

Leaving no trace  
of his American-made squad boots.  
We have no sand.  
We have no olives.  
We have only snow  
and corvids  
and blood  
on our hands.  
No colour at Christmas  
not during genocide.

## **Melt Marshmallows**

Bombs dropping on tents.

I don't understand this sentence.  
I can't comprehend it.

Bomb—a container filled with explosive or incendiary material, designed to explode on impact or when detonated by a timing, proximity, or remote-control device.

Drop—to let or make (something) fall vertically.

Tent—a portable shelter made of cloth, supported by one or more poles and stretched tight by cords or loops attached to pegs driven into the ground.

YES.

I understand the words, but they don't fit together in my head.

Bomb—a barbaric bringer of death with no place in this century.

Drop—what happens to my heart when I hear of more children burning.



Tent—Sea shores, forests walks and long drives.  
Riverside hikes, laughing children, shadow puppets  
and melting smores on the fire.

Melting smores on the fire.  
Melting ... Smores  
Not people.  
Smores.

Melt smores not people.  
Melt marshmallows not men.

Thats what tents are for.  
Fun.  
PORTABLE shelters.  
NOT permanent homes.  
NOT targets for bombs.

Tent—a word that evokes excitement, nostalgia and warmth.  
Not a word that should ever be in the same sentence as BOMB.

## **Weep For Palestine**

I weep for Palestine.

I weep for the babies in their white shrouds, spattered red.

I weep for the stoneless graves, where even in death there is no dignity.

I weep for the olive trees whose life-giving fruits have been replaced by  
dead body parts,  
dangling.

I weep  
And weep

And weep  
And then  
I stand.  
I stand  
And I march  
And I scream  
And I sob  
And I roar

FREE PALESTINE  
SAOIRSE DON PHALAISTÍN

I weep,  
Oh how deeply I weep.  
But what use is weeping  
If the tears don't make you stand?



## Michal Lowkain

**hey everyone would rather prefer garlic than white  
phosphorus in their dishes**

gaza  
stripped  
of  
water  
food  
electricity  
(we  
must  
take  
the  
power  
back  
anyway)  
homes  
rights  
dignity

stripped  
of  
children  
stripped  
of  
childhood

naked  
blindfolded  
damaged  
mutilated  
colonised  
displaced  
murdered

ignored  
ridiculed

reduced  
to  
rubble

yes  
we're  
quite  
busy  
here  
we're  
staying  
occupied

and you  
israel  
what's your plan?

we're the victims

so

let's kill them all  
nakba them again  
send them anywhere  
to egypt  
to the sea  
to the moon  
or a black hole  
(our yankee friends  
could be of assistance)

we can see  
no civilians  
on the streets

playgrounds  
in hospitals  
schools  
or prams

so

let's kill them  
human animals  
gas arabs  
gas gaza  
bomb them  
boom boom boom  
again and again  
or just  
starve them  
all in all  
they love their  
hunger strikes

and besides

we love the smell of  
white phosphorus  
and their mourning

## Alexis Lykiard

### Gaza's Goya

(Dr. Khalil Khalidy)

An angel painted  
with a nameless\* dead child's blood  
moves viewers to tears...

'Icecream Truck' depicts  
a new cold-store for corpses...  
This young man's endless

dedication to  
life's healing arts while facing  
death, brings hope from hell.

[\* No.991]

### 1924 / 2024

(Skyros to Gaza)

Mother's life-long teenage crush on Rupert Brooke  
began after his sudden, unpoetic death at sea.  
Was it his handsome blond, collegiate look  
she fell for? Or just adolescent empathy,  
nurtured on new heroic legends, the rhetorical  
flourish that opens his sonnet, "*If I should die...*"?

People these days grow sadder and wiser, for death  
in Gaza's everywhere, and no way metaphorical.  
Palestinians, heroes all, resist with every breath,  
remind us to speak out, never forget, treasure the here  
and now, the deathless verse of Refaat Alareer,  
victim of genocide, that starts, "*If I must die*"

## Simon Maddrell

### **mirrorspeak**

*includes translated extracts from M. K. Gandhi, the Bible, Quran and Torah*

Torahit's like we're back in 1948  
and the book is being rewritten.  
*mirrorspeak* is a new convention  
to contrive a look of great sincerity  
when one accuses others of what  
one does oneself. alas, *doublespeak*  
echoes older books & its omnipotents:

*do unto others whatsoever ye would  
that they should do to you. eye under  
eye, fracture under fracture, tooth  
under tooth, so it will be given to him  
and the world will be blind. do ye  
even so to them that ye resist not evil,  
their wounds the law of retribution.*

*revenge is permissible but patience  
is better. one should not take revenge,  
the other is not the reason for what  
happened. you shall not take vengeance  
nor bear grudges against any of your  
people. if you were to harm the others,  
only to the measure you were harmed.*

the meaning is understood in 2042  
what has turned around went around.  
the world suffers from fewer rivers  
to the sea, from ice that is no longer  
white, from sand that overcomes soil.  
humans no longer the centre of any  
thing. and the mirror finally speaks.

## **Death in Translation**

*after Ludwig Wittgenstein*

*the world is everything that is the case  
where language is a metaphor for reality  
pushed towards the edge of comprehension*

violent murderous rampage / acting in self-defence /  
merciless assault / people massacred / cutting off  
food & water / military response / genocide /  
power cuts / taking care of civilians

an entire nation out there is responsible

land & property disputes / occupied territory /  
contested neighbourhoods / abandoned areas /  
zones of conflict / internally displaced /  
security fences / checkpoints / apartheid

a partial and deeply flawed picture

dismantled infrastructure / collateral damage /  
explosions / buildings collapsing / schools &  
hospitals hit / human shields / civil security /  
militants / a moral army / terrorists

deliberately curated manipulative description

teenage men arrested / numbers died /  
detained / kidnapped / targeted / shot  
by a sniper / assassinate / slaughter /  
children of darkness / martyred

the situation has been decontextualised  
the right to live / killed / monsters /  
hostages / detainees / sympathisers /  
women / babies / unborn /



human animals / untermenschen

*whereof one cannot speak  
thereof one must be silent  
one who understands me  
finally recognises this as senseless*

[Note: The italicised passages are translations from Wittgenstein].



## Kevin Patrick McCann

### In Gaza

There's a boy,  
Maybe three, maybe four,  
Dirty knees,  
Dusty face,  
Tousled hair  
And within arm's reach  
There's another,  
Probably his brother,  
Head bandaged,  
One eye patched over,  
His tee-shirt blood streaked.

They reach out,  
One to another,  
Try to hold hands

But can't manage.

They're shaking too much.

## Stuart McFarlane

### By any other name

Now the school of semantics is fully enrolled,  
we begin to believe the lies we're being sold.  
'Proportional response', 'Collateral damage'.  
'It's a situation we feel we can manage'.  
Politicians, as ever, so sensible,  
queue up to defend the indefensible.  
The Israelis freely act without constraint.  
The Americans continue to urge restraint.  
Schools, housing, hospitals; all are destroyed,  
yet, still, euphemistic terms are employed.  
Artillery posts now even have trouble  
finding a building to reduce to rubble.  
And, as Gaza withers, festers and rots  
the diplomats tie themselves up in knots.  
'Not a ceasefire, a humanitarian pause'.  
Treating the symptoms, not the underlying cause.  
But Israel miscalculated, and crossed a red line,  
in denying the idea of a Palestine.  
For an idea does not so easily die;  
all the dead children of Gaza so testify.  
How can the fighting now ever cease?  
There's not the faintest prospect of peace.  
By conducting such a senseless war  
they've only ensured centuries more.  
You can justify anything, if you try hard enough  
but, deep down, do we realize, it's all so much guff.  
So, don't pretend, as you kill, wound and maim,  
it's not murder; by any other name.

## **Gaze on Gaza**

Gaze on Gaza; and weep. See the child in A and E,  
the child, alone, in A and E.  
See the man who stares,  
the man who only stares.  
See the woman who screams,  
the woman who only screams.

The bloody bandage, discarded limb, the blasted street, all rubble.  
Thick smoke billowing; low down  
a tepid sun that strains to shine.

See another bloodied child,  
the mother who still screams, and a father who only stares.  
See what may not be unseen.  
Try, if you can, to avert your eyes. Gaze on Gaza.  
Gaze on Gaza. And weep.

## **Alan McGuire**

### **God is not the state of Israel**

He is not the bombs that drop  
on sleeping children  
prisoners being starved of hope  
women hoping for rain and water  
the olive tree witnessing 76 years of destruction

if we could stop the fire,  
what would be his use?  
so many of you  
muslim, jew  
a battle to the death  
benefits no-one  
yet we sing of rivers and seas  
but not in harmony  
and we will not cease until  
Palestine is free

viva Palestine!  
viva the international working class!  
viva al-andalus, future  
present and past!

## Jeannie McKeown

### Collateral

When all the children in Gaza  
were told to flee,  
their parents gathered them up  
and began to move south.

Behind our glass phone screens  
their faces, captured, stay frozen.  
Some are wounded,  
some are dead already,  
all are terrified.

Their eyes are not lit with joy  
but with pain,  
not with innocence,  
but with knowledge of their fate  
as collateral,  
written off as acceptable loss.

They have fled for a year  
among the ruins,  
back and forth, up and down,  
at the whim of a madman  
who cries 'human shields'  
with no acknowledgement  
of shared humanity.

In truth, there has never been  
a safe place to go.  
In photo essays,  
clouds of dust and shrapnel,  
dark blood on chubby cheeks,  
dark curls, once ruffled by loving hands,  
now stiff with cement dust,  
and incoming death.

## Mia Maria

### we just want peace

With all this chaos  
We just want peace  
With our hearts on our sleeves  
We just want peace  
As the flesh of our children seeps through our hands  
We just want peace  
...we must have peace

If blood is our bath water  
And guns our morning alarm  
What does peace truly mean?  
Is it outside of us,  
This feeling of being free?  
Oh how I hope it may be...

Can I buy this reality with the pennies I don't have?  
What on earth does peace mean  
When we starve as we watch Israel's decree?  
When we are being ethnically cleansed for land, power and greed?

Must this be cultivated inside?  
Because out here,  
Comfort and warmth are few and far between

...this middle eastern plane weighs heavy on my heart  
But I know, I just know, peace has to lay within me

And I hope we have proven to the world  
That although we hardly sleep  
And some of humanity has blamed us for the land we keep  
That you can still feel peace  
And I don't mean the sort of peace you feel coming home to a cooked

meal after a hard day at work  
But the sort of peace you feel when everything around you is crumbling  
and burning...  
But so is my heart  
And that's what keeps my cogs turning  
Because I will not give up  
I will not give in  
And as long as my middle eastern heart is beating  
And the world is listening, not just hearing  
And boycotting,  
And pleading,  
Streaming,  
Sharing  
& Seeing  
I know love is not forsaken

With our hearts on our sleeves  
And my truth, on this sheet  
We. Just. Want. Peace.



## Alan Morrison

### *from The Grey Children of Gaza*

We will strike Gaza as our forebears did Amalek  
Children of Light against Children of Darkness  
(We will bury their children in rubble of darkness)  
We do so with the authority of the Old Testament  
& if anyone points out that our bombs have buried  
15,000 Gazan children under rubble  
Then they are verbalising a “blood libel”—  
Anyone who challenges our Might is right  
Will be smeared as an anti-Semite  
Even though that term also encompasses  
The very Palestinians we are ~~ethnically cleansing/~~  
~~forcibly displacing/~~encouraging to migrate

Hamas say if they get the chance they’ll unleash  
7 October again & again & again  
So in order to prevent that ever being an option,  
In self-defence, Israel is bombing  
The Gaza Strip again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
& again & again & again & again  
...until there is nothing left but rubble  
Buried under it a million or two million  
Tens of thousands of innocent children  
Dismembered limbs  
Amputated without anaesthetic

They will be known by Numbers,  
By popped-out eyeballs  
& exploded heads  
By torn torsos hanging from bombed buildings  
Like gypsies' washing on winter trees  
Or carcasses on butchers' meat hooks

\*

Refugees burnt alive in their tents  
& wounded youths tied up to drips  
In hospital beds  
Melted  
Incinerated

[To think, if every nation state enacted  
This kind & scale of "self-defence"  
Then half the nations in the world  
Would be buried under rubble by now]

\*

Famine sets in  
Many strap rocks around their waists  
To stop the pangs of hunger

\*

We turn a blind eye to the genocide of innocents,  
The genocide of Islamic Palestinians,  
The genocide of Palestinian Christians,  
Bombs were dropping on Bethlehem last Christmas,  
*Jesus in the rubble*—what does this make us?  
Self-hating Christians,  
Self-flagellating Gentiles...

## Nick Moss

### Dahiya Doctrine

Bibi and Yoav banging on the table, demanding  
Ashes, dust, blood.  
The IDF playing moksha patam with groups of the displaced.  
“Move south of Wadi Gaza”;  
So Khan Younis must be safe  
Until it isn't.  
Plenty of snakes. No ladders.  
Bombs land on the square  
At the same time you do.  
**Ashes, dust, blood.**

A line of refugees walking through  
A topography of ruin  
Beit Hanoum razed  
Jabalia razed  
Gaza City razed  
Khan Younis razed.  
Al-Mawasi  
Is “the humanitarian zone.”  
After that, the sea.  
Let the human animals drown...  
**Ashes, dust, blood.**

Outside the “humanitarian zone”  
Is given over to inhumanity  
The peculiar , debauched genius  
That can turn a hospital or a school  
Into a mass grave.  
“We are now rolling out the Gaza Nakba.”  
Revenant families caper in the wreckage  
Of the Dar al-Shifa death zone  
**Ashes, dust, blood**

Article 51(5)(b) of 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions  
(and the Statute of the International Criminal Court )

**Ashes, dust, blood**

“intentionally launching an attack in the knowledge that such attack

**Ashes, dust, blood**

will cause incidental loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian  
objects ... which would be clearly excessive in relation to the concrete and  
direct

**Ashes, dust, blood**

overall military advantage anticipated” constitutes a war crime in  
international armed conflicts

**Ashes, dust, blood**

Major-General Gadi Eizenkot: “What happened in the Dahiya quarter of  
Beirut in 2006 will happen in every village from which Israel is fired on”

**Ashes, dust, blood**

“We will apply disproportionate force on it and cause great damage and  
destruction there. ”

**Ashes, dust, blood**

A group of half-naked Palestinian men

Illuminated by the light of an IDF jeep

Single file, blindfolded, hands bound,

Linked together by flex.

Due process ceased long ago.

All of this land of ashes, dust and blood

Is a permanent black site.

Min an-nahr 'ilā l-baḥr

## Dar Al-Shifa

Like a war scripted by Asimov on crystal meth  
Squads of quadcopter drones  
Shooting children in the head,  
Patrolling the wreckage of the hospital.  
The shrill scream of the blades,  
Waiting to target anyone left.

Dar al-Shifa. House of healing.  
Hopital. Shelter for the needy.  
Just more debris now.  
Concrete dust  
Blown-out windows  
Blood on the walls.  
Blood on the floor  
Bodies of surgeons  
Piled on bodies of patients  
Piled on bodies of parents  
With the bodies of their dead kids  
All meat now  
For the feral dogs.

If the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health  
Is one of the fundamental rights of every human being  
And if the IDF “follows international law”  
When it turns a hospital  
Into a boneyard  
Tell me the one-drop rule  
That makes Palestinians  
Then, all somehow  
Not-quite human

And you wait for condemnation  
From the elected guardians  
Of “international law”  
And their lockstep oppositions

Who nod through the arms sales  
And the Horizon Europe tech funds  
That put legions of quadcopters  
Up high in Gaza skies,  
And democracy shrivels and fails,  
And little by little it dies.

Lenny Bruce has hit the crystal meth.  
Satire is tragedy plus time.  
There is a bunker and tunnel network  
Under al-Shifa  
At Building Number 2  
But it wasn't hard to find  
As it was built by Israeli architects  
In 1983.

Lenny said in '67  
That if they killed Christ today  
Catholic kids would be wearing  
Electric chairs around their necks  
Instead of crosses.  
Anyone know how to make  
A quadcopter pendant?

## Jade Mutyora

### Complicit

We are misshapen cells  
imperfect tiny oxbows trying  
to flow with enough tentative  
unison to fuel a movement.

Our hands are splintered  
from branded, mass-produced  
placards that rely on our feet  
to march them forward.

We are too full of knowing  
of ourselves; to know how to  
stretch away the terror of sky  
and rename it wonder.

Thirsty for our share  
we tilt faces skyward when we yell  
so our protestations rain back  
down to flood our mouths.

Voice smothers institutional silence  
a keening feedback loop—  
it won't reach burst eardrums  
but we will never hang up.

Some shift their loaded hands  
to take a date from the offered box  
We spit medjool stones onto the lawn  
dream of trees, unrazed; shading the windows.

## Jane Newberry

### Hopeless in Gaza

Deep seething anger veiled by desert dust,  
desperate pleas from every laptop screen,  
history repeats the Ayatul Kursi trust—

confronts *God is my Rock*, the psalmist's just  
assurance for the innocents trapped between  
deep seething anger veiled by desert dust.

Fractured lost souls bury those who passed  
and pick survival from the war machine  
history repeats the Ayatul Kursi trust—

while fearful of the next strike at Hamas;  
lost children beg for comfort, somewhere clean,  
Deep seething anger veiled by desert dust,

So many left with merely hate and lust  
from Jabalia Camp, what does Jannah mean?  
history repeats the Ayatul Kursi trust—

Whispered to each prayer mat as the faithful must,  
*by the Waters of Babylon*—wretched exile scene.  
Deep seething anger veiled by desert dust,  
history repeats the Ayatul Kursi trust—



## Postcard to Israel

Monday.

*Dear Benjamin,*

Here's a picture of our church,  
all very peaceful in November.

The colours in the trees are lovely.

Just back from Remembrance service—  
much more emotional than I expected;  
the family of the boy who died  
bore up well, put on a brave face.

The elder of the brothers cried,  
so did I, as I thought of last week  
when old Jack's circling dove  
got shot by the neighbour's lad,  
supposed to be a bird of peace—  
anyway I thought of you.

No more space.

*Jane*

## Jeanna Louise Ní Ríordáin

### "From Tents We Will Build Universities"

*In response to the scholasticide practiced by the Israeli army,  
displaced Gazan teachers have set up makeshift schools in tents.*

*'When schools are destroyed, so too  
are hopes and dreams'*

—Mahmoud Darwish

Overhead, the drones are buzzing,  
All around is dust & rubble

They have no desks, no chairs, no pencils,  
No uniforms, textbooks or rucksacks

But here children can read the Quran,  
Learn Arabic & Maths & English

Here they sing & chant & play,  
Draw pictures & dance their feelings

Here they share their hopes & dreams  
Of being a lawyer, doctor, dentist

They tell their friends & they come too, news  
*of our schools spreads faster than an airstrike.*

## **Unbreakable Spirit**

We'll start again from scratch &  
rebuild all the flattened schools,

The colleges & science labs,  
the museums & cinemas

We'll replace all the books  
in the burned-down libraries

With history books & literature,  
Arabic poetry

We'll open new music schools,  
New theatres & concert halls

We've done it before & will again,  
*From tents we will build universities.*

## James O'Brien

### Kanal / White Phosphorus

Portrayed as rats they lived as rats in requiem sewers,  
The tributaries and shit waterfalls passing under the Ghetto.  
The terror wall of death, a cylindrical funnel to Hell,  
Illuminated by the grenade flash, shrapnel and the cascade of bullets,  
And the searing excoriate of the flame-throwers.  
The Uprising fought and held, clinging to dust with one hand,  
The carbine with the other, driven here, as they were,  
In taxi cab starvation and fear, outriders of defiance,  
Stood firm, as deliverers of a retributed future,  
Stared into their faces, the alarum of imminent death,  
Gouged dirt furrows as true as the plough.  
This cesspit, this squalor, the riven nature of the beast,  
Death here was chosen as superior to Hell,  
The fathomless ocean of occupation, liquidation.  
The atonal obliteration of their trace.  
A trajectory of looping, a fusillade of lethal force,  
An ornate fountain of acid, attaching to a child's skin,  
The flat playground, a level playing field of despair,  
Now a gurney, generating blood, in a bombed out operating theatre,  
Devoid of doctors or a sigh of compassion.  
The pain as the material sears and oxidizes into young flesh,  
That heat cannot be extinguished, it burrows into the bone,  
Chemical compounds will not ease, nor will be washed away,  
As the telegenically dead children are portrayed,  
Gaping mouths in frozen screams, shock and death soon follow.  
The very essence of humanity reduced to a drip tray of charred matter,  
Obliteration of children's flesh, the catastrophe played out,  
The crucible of fear ignited by white streaks earthbound,  
The vapour trails of destruction, carrion crows pick at scars,  
The eyes of the telegenically dead, as they watch over,  
The death ride horsemen spur on to the ruptured vein,  
On the ash barges to the Gulag of ideas.

## **b.c. pellegrini**

### **conversation between two people who should have human rights**

*do you know it's very cold here?*  
we have heaters in our houses,  
which cost too much to keep on,  
but then we have blankets.

*we have to walk very high  
to get connection on our phones.*  
we message our friends when we like  
and call our mothers without warning.

*the sound is constant and unbearable.*  
we choose music to listen to,  
as loud as we want;  
sometimes a loud car wakes us up.

*we have no food,  
we are getting sick,  
we are drinking bad water,  
our hospitals are being bombed.*

we get take out when we like,  
have filters for our water;  
we're allowed every comfort  
but aren't any more deserving.

## **liberation is inevitable**

try as you might,  
you can never steal  
what can never be yours:

the heart knows,  
the air knows,  
the lands knows,

from the river,  
to the sea.

try as you might,  
you can't turn words of love  
into words of hate:

the ear knows,  
the earth knows,  
the heart knows,

from the river,  
to the sea.

you colonize,  
you oppress,  
you kill and destroy,

but the land knows,  
the people know,  
from Turtle Island,  
to Palestine:

you can never take  
what can never be yours,  
and liberation is inevitable.

they have sown the seeds of freedom,  
and everyday we nourish them,  
for a flourishing return:

from the river,  
to the sea.



## Ciara Peters

### I Wear This Grief Like an Amulet

His favourite game  
was hide and seek  
His small body  
wriggling under covers,  
the falling tent, engulfing him.

Chestnut curls covered in cotton  
Sticky hands wrapped in white sheets.

Outside, among the crumbling buildings  
Red rover continues  
Children form two lines, with arms linked  
Victory  
when the opposite player breaks the chain.

Lined up, bound  
Playing sardines in a can  
The line extends  
as the hiding place is revealed  
Scapegoats in this tug of war.

Persephone among the ruins  
The great mother among the ashes.

His small body, now heavy, limp  
babes in arms  
The child pieta  
strewn across her lap.

Chestnut curls covered in cotton  
Sticky hands wrapped in white sheets.  
The skull that formed within



Now cradled in her hands  
Sealed with a goodnight kiss

Outside, in the rubble  
the game of hide and seek continues.



## Yana Petticrew

### Scorched Clay

We watch atrocities through mirrors that catch  
the glint of the sun that seeks to burn our retinas  
and we write about the burning of our own eyes.

We write for an archive already on fire, throwing our papers onto a  
smoking heap  
in hopes the smoke reaches the stars. We send solidarity  
in the form of roving bodies through streets that sit under electronic eyes  
that will never be burned by the sun.  
And when solar teeth chew on our sinewy flesh in the last days,  
we will be asked, 'what did you write?'  
Our hearts must sit atop our lines of poetry and be weighed  
against the words we used in this time. Did our enjambment hold up  
under the beating stone that grows heavier each day?  
Liquid consonance spills out between the line breaks and stains the floor  
of Heaven.  
Did our poetry change anything?

To occupy a space is to suffocate it, to make yourself everything  
everywhere  
and leave no room for nothing. In occupying the white of the page,  
what does the word do?  
When we write the words occupy our minds, they swarm around  
the grey matter like colourblind hummingbirds  
agitating with sharp black beaks.

I find they overwhelm me, the sharp pecks leaving shredded ribbons of  
sparse  
poetics and utter bleak behind.  
What do my words matter when they are abuzz on a sugar rush?

It feels selfish to write of personal calamity, bits of the Before offer only  
rags to clean with  
Every line redundant, every thought distraction

What am I resisting?

And what of the After?

How can we continue to write pithy lines of personal poetry and  
measure our rhythms within the  
parameters set out for us in the post- post- post- post-  
How dare we call ourselves poets when we write from relative comfort  
but comfort for how long?

The boomerang comes hurtling towards us  
aimed straight between our eyes  
The imperial arm outstretches to rip away mark making

So make marks  
steal charcoal from the fires burning in the homes of cats.

## **durmedurme**

*after 'falastinibachchekelijelori' by Faiz Ahmed Faiz*

and in the drone morning her dust hands  
will smooth over his matted hair and his  
ashen body for when he is shrouded  
in white there will be too many there will  
be shrouded mothers too with ashen sons  
and their dust hands will smooth the  
blood brows of babes with bones that  
shake bones that burn under the sun  
that nefarious holy sun that freezes  
holds the ground tight now salted  
and drones out the adhan with its  
incessant burn buzzing brightly bursting  
beyond the border between mothers and  
their shrouded sons that tight ground  
that salted earth that impossible rubble

## Wendy Pettifer

### A Gentile's View

They taught me how to sweep in TseElim  
Hold the broom firm from the top  
Wide arm movements in a semi-circle  
Sweep away unwanted debris, cluttered peelings  
Hurt feelings, traces of another life.

I learnt not to cry at Kiryat Mona  
Peeling onions stemming pointless tears  
Salty, compassion is a waste of time.  
Plunged my infected fingers into icy water  
Tore off the outer skins to get to the sweet core

In the Negev Bedouins gave me mint tea on a rough blanket  
“Aiwa” means yes and I want more

I learnt about socialism on Kibbutz  
Collective living strengthens the spirit  
Hardens the resolve to fight for land  
Farm intensively for greater good  
Not random olive trees and orange groves

I learnt that will and determination  
Delivers from the greatest evil  
Against all odds of harsh terrain and dark-skinned others  
Now I see the consequences of that resolve.

## Counting

Too many days to count  
between the engraving of the name of his son  
on the tiny gold bracelet  
which he never wore  
and finding the charcoal ashes  
of his father from the day he caught fire

Too many days to count  
between keeping them both safe  
in a papier-mâché peacock blue egg  
in his pocket when he had one

and on the day he didn't  
too many seconds before  
they're spilt on the road  
next to his blown bones.

## Colin Pink

### Homeward Bound

On my way to the picture framer's studio  
in Lewisham I walk past abandoned shops,  
derelict houses.

And I can't help replaying in my mind  
the air strikes and collapsing buildings  
in Gaza City, engulfed by fire and dust.

It's a weary day as I make my way home  
across jangling but peaceful London,  
glad at journey's end that I have a home to go to.

### Crushing Pistachios

I'm in the kitchen making lunch: it's  
Jamie Oliver's *Lemony Rocket Farfalle*

I'm prepping all the ingredients  
and have to crush pistachio kernels

I place them under a tea towel cloud  
and from high above I pound them

when I lift the cloth and gaze down  
I see their shattered remains and get

a sudden vision of the ruins of Gaza

## **A Refusal to Mourn**

*(after Dylan Thomas)*

Bare lives are broken  
carelessly smashed  
like crockery hurled  
in a rage by the hand  
of a psychotic golem.

Dylan Thomas's Blitz burned  
babe plays out again and again  
a thousand times in Gaza  
where the elegy of innocence  
and youth is brutally denied.

The crushed cannot speak  
and it's so hard to count  
all the nameless dead  
our eyes grow hazy  
sowing seeds of salt.

From one Blitz to another  
eyes unfocus themselves  
afraid to see the brute  
dissection of so many  
small shattered bodies.

## **Grey Death (Beit Lahia)**

she is the same grey  
as the concrete wall  
over which she's draped  
like a rag doll dangling  
the bare skin of her arm  
covered in thick dust  
which camouflages her  
in her final resting place  
arm down, head down,  
cascade of dust filled hair  
falling out the window  
poised between the hell  
inside and the hell outside  
a street filled with bodies  
one glance tells us this  
young girl is surely dead  
part of a horrific statistic  
one of many murdered  
by the Israeli air strikes  
on people in Beit Lahia  
the IDF says it is looking  
into it but we know they  
were looking into it with  
whining drones before  
they pressed the button



## **Gabriel Rosenstock**

### **Jesus, son of Mary**

Jesus, do you still pray?  
Do you pray for the end of conflict  
in Palestine, your native home,  
Or do you pray for the end of Palestine itself  
The end of Israel  
The end of all nations?  
Nations have been brewing mischief long enough.  
If a nationless world is your prayer,

O Sacred Heart of Jesus

Allow me to pray with you.

### **Our Lady of Palestine**

*a bilingual poem by Gabriel Rosenstock*

Mary, pray for massacred infants

Mary, pray for infants still alive

Mary, pray for those as yet unborn

Pray, dear Mary, for Palestine.

Mary, you saw your own Son tortured

Mary, you saw him die in pain:

Pray, dear Mary for all Palestinians

Mary, it's Calvary all over again

## Michal Rubin

### We enter the hall of death

*"I am you.  
I am your past  
And killing me,  
You kill you."*

—*Refaat Alareer*

we lay on the same soil  
damp with the memories

mine

yours

the doors slam behind  
we abandon living  
we engage in the life of death

yours

mine

we wander through our stories  
projected on the mirrored walls  
we touch the etched details in

your story

my story

our fingers get lost  
where the wind blew  
our remains

yours rained

on mine

mine

colored yours

together we dissolve —  
our eulogy  
another war

## Who will Grieve the Unmourned

*“Don’t look! Just keep walking.”*  
—*Basman Derawi*

no one can stop  
to leave a flower  
on the unburied dead

collect the scattered  
unuttered words  
nor adorn the broke-off stories

You say *Keep walking*

drag the brazenness of death  
with your belongings  
litter a path with futile protests

You say *Don’t stop*

only the remnant  
of your shadow  
shelters the unburied

## Chrys Salt

### Hungry

This poem is hungry  
for words it cannot find to feed itself.

Homeless and cold  
it scavenges for scraps  
to tell a broken world  
how it can mend.

A lost wanderer with sewn lips  
scouting the barren landscape of the dead  
to write in tears,  
in blood, their desolation.

If there were any god,  
theirs, yours or mine  
could they unstitch sewn lips  
speak to the ears that will not hear  
the hands we cannot stay,  
create new words  
to work a miracle?

## Gaza 2023

Mum cooks Zac's favourite pasta,  
slices, stirs.  
Mum's not missing, buried in their house.  
It's not her hand he sees, a ring she wears  
a ring he knows and screams.

Eight year old Farah searches for her doll  
can't sleep without it but it's blown sky high  
with every stone and stick of memory.  
Isabel has hers,  
a rabbit cuddled close.  
Snuggled down her duvet  
pink with unicorns  
she begs another story before lights go out.

Cass hunts the hopeless wounded corridors.  
shouts the names of missing mum, dad, twin.  
But Dad's not here,  
he orders Arsenal strip online,  
pumps up a leather ball.  
Tells him to mind the glass in the conservatory.

A swaddled daughter in his arms  
Dad limps down alley ways  
of piss and shit,  
discarded shoes, bent mudguards, pans,  
torn blankets stained with menstrual blood,  
searching for a place to bury her.  
Clara's not dead, she laughs  
high on a home-made hoist dad built  
to fly her in the garage  
in a fairy frock.

Kids in the park with skateboards,  
nosing Shaz's counter-top for sweets

the lad with AHD next door  
our grandchildren—  
all these,  
made sudden orphans,  
sudden broken things  
not to be mended bodies, minds,  
not to be salvaged from their savage lot.  
Not to be schooled or fed,  
wear Arsenal strip,  
kick balls.  
Not to be cuddled, loved by those they've lost  
not to be tucked in bed with stories  
or a goodnight kiss,  
not to be any more at home,  
  
dear god, what if.....?



## Stephen Sawyer

### The Zero Point

*(After Jorie Graham)*

A mother with filling eyes  
puts a name to a shoe,  
agrees to leave the bag  
inside the bag unzipped  
when a child who  
thought of ways to save the fish,  
is killed in Palestine.

Is this the zero point  
where she must let go  
or be pulled away?  
Her daughter is still  
asking for ice cream.

Whatever 'before' had meant  
is breaking open,  
the river inside her  
no longer flows through,  
the river inside her  
is being siphoned off.

\*

Over here,  
a woman rolling up a carpet.  
Is this an eyebrow?  
Killer drones  
above the breakfast table,  
a sniper  
on the staircase, over here

an ankle  
looks like it's still running.  
To whom does she recall this?  
A spider's web is still intact,  
*I am barely here*, says the light.

\*

She turns to the dead more now,  
finds shoes to fit the older girl,  
becomes a mausoleum herself,  
not even corpses are safe  
as children are killed in Palestine.  
They are bombing graveyards—  
headboards become tombstones—  
they are bombing the north,  
and the sea, the eyes of her skin.  
*Our kitchen window was here ...*  
They are bombing Naseebah,  
the Arab Spring, autumn and Eid,  
a fiancée and her entire family,  
they are bombing tortured water,  
the scent of coffee in the ruins,  
they are bombing sleeplessness,  
shrapnel holes, vocal chords,  
stand-up comedy, dance and poetry.

\*

The clock still ticks  
where the kitchen used to be,  
they are bombing teaspoons,  
humidity, fertility,  
and clothes wet with blood, they  
are bombing a purple flower on a foot,



a nostril's darkness, we can't tell  
if it's a boy or girl. They are  
bombing the rubble in heads and hands,  
the lips in a shattered mirror.  
*Where is the rest of me?*

\*

People bury their dead, queue for the tap,  
a loaf, two loaves of bread.  
*No need to tune in, we are  
the news*, children that fly without wings.  
They are bombing air waves,  
tanks and planes on plasma screens.  
To whom does she recall this? When they  
switch on the power in two hours,  
do you charge your phone, lap top  
or wash your clothes? A mother touches  
her children's noses, ears and mouths,  
looks at the light on a collar bone,  
her reverse image in eyes, says  
Look for your face, bring back  
my hands, my head, my feet,  
all the parts of my body.

## Janet Sillett

### The breaking of bread

Families queuing for round flat loaves  
each morning before dawn  
the struggle for bread

Sharq Bakery in Gaza City bombed late October 2023  
in the doorway blood mixes with flour  
the smell of baking lingering in the space that is left

I recall Jewish black bread, caraway studded  
the scent of my grandmother's house in Salford 1960  
reconstruction in flour and yeast

### Catastrophe

Starved of light  
an exodus in slow motion before the rains of a Gazan winter  
the memory of dispossession in every stone

I picture the grey Polish landscape of my imagination  
lines of people displaced moving  
always moving

when people are unnamed  
there is no need for bread

[Author's Note: More than 70 percent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have been displaced since 8 October 2023. Up to 2 million Jews fled the pogroms in the Pale of Settlement in Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914].

## **To those who seek nemesis in my name**

you do not do this in my name  
you do not use my name  
you do not speak for me

my anger is mine  
not yours  
you do not use my name  
to light up the dying sky with sulphurous stars  
to bleed the ocean  
to bury the past in shards

you do not cancel air and water in my name

you do not use my name  
to dispossess the words of poets

spit your lies into someone else's mouth

## Steven Taylor

### Jaffa (used to be a byword for a succulent orange)

Before you say I'm antisemitic

He wasn't Jewish

But there was a child in our class  
at St. George's (kindergarten)  
who kept stabbing other girls  
and boys with leaded pencils

It didn't seem to bother him  
how much pain he caused

The teacher warned him  
repeatedly, explaining

how children other than himself  
had feelings, nerve endings

Eventually she became so  
exasperated with his behaviour  
she took away his pencils

told him,  
read a book instead of stabbing

So why does Britain  
supply arms to Israel?

## **Outlook**

Mainly cloudy  
A chance of rain  
Dusty. Grubby  
Rubble mostly  
Death expected

Britain

Could send umbrellas  
But they prefer  
Providing weapons  
To the killers

(with instructions  
to be careful, obviously)

The sound of weeping and  
Wailing is distressing  
For our viewers

## Violet White

**Today, after reading the Poet from Gaza,  
I lifted up my head ...**

I have been shaken  
to the soul's core,  
broken by our harmfulness,  
beaten back by the  
awful denial.

But your words call me  
to lift my head,  
to pledge to go again.  
I raise my voice,  
I raise my fist  
to principalities  
and powers; I lift  
my most militant prayer.

With you,  
I will again take up  
real words  
against this dread deluge;  
this Nakba  
driven  
by the legion  
of enthroned pretenders  
berserking us all.

Oh, Palestinians of Gaza,  
you take me, yet again,  
to the heart  
of all things.

How do you do this?

How is it that  
such fullness of life  
will always fly out  
from your terrible truth  
to brush  
my innermost being  
with its so soft wings?

## **Sumud**

I tell you, we  
have more death here  
than they have in Gaza,  
where they are martyred  
in their tens of thousands  
with the bombs we send—  
vainly—to sever them  
from history, and still  
they rise in the Sumud  
of a life we, ourselves,  
discarded, somewhere  
along our terrible  
trajectory to this place.

Day after day, these  
same Palestinians  
patiently, persistently,  
school us, confining us,  
with all our works,  
to a history of shame.

## Jonathan Wonham

### A Pier

*A Pier*

human

a pier a pier a pier a pier a pier a pier a pier

human

appear appear appear appear appear appear

human

*A Pier Reviewed*

hope

this a pier this a pier this a pier this a pier

hope

disappear disappear disappear disappear

hope



## The Insects

I was a fly  
on a dead child's eye  
amidst the rubble  
of the siege of Gaza.

I was a moth  
caught up in a cloth  
that was used as a shroud  
at the siege of Gaza.

I was a bee  
that paused on the knee  
of a weeping mother  
at the siege of Gaza.

I was a butterfly  
way up in the sky  
watching the brutality  
of the siege of Gaza.

Don't curse us flies.  
Don't blame us moths.  
Don't chide us bees.  
Don't scoff at butterflies.

It was not we  
who ordered destruction,  
the razing of cities,  
the harrying of crowds.

It was not we  
who stoked the fear,  
obscured the truth,  
prescribed a guilty silence.

## The One-Eyed World

For a long time you believed  
in something, but now  
you're starting to wonder.

Life seems to contravene  
having any doubts.  
The doubtful are powerless.

The world's eye opens wide,  
green as a wet meadow  
in the month of May.

It watches the time ticking by,  
small birds taking flight,  
little children running.

Old ones sit down to rest.  
They've been moved on  
so often now, like vagrants.

The eye scans the names  
of the ones who die,  
the faces of the ones who cry.

Everything is recorded:  
the colour of the bank notes,  
the hues of the sky.

## **A School Destroyed**

Nothing is left here  
at our feet except rubble  
and stuff crushed beneath.

Elemental stuff,  
ill-sorted, unclassified  
but nonetheless claimed

by weeping families  
who collect scattered organs  
in old plastic bags

hoping to find names.

## Mantz Yorke

### Where Once a City Stood

You'd think there'd been an earthquake  
measuring 9 on the Richter Scale,  
but this destruction is human:  
blocks, shops, houses and hospitals  
blasted into rubble,  
except where windowless walls  
have propped each other up  
leaving corners standing  
as impermanent monuments  
to unbridled power.

The greyness of shattered concrete  
is relieved by a swatch of orange—  
perhaps part of a skirt.  
You see no people: they're dead—  
the smell hangs in the air—  
or are hiding under bits of floor  
not yet bombed into slabs, afraid  
to forage for water or food, or flee.  
The survivors will not emerge  
till the drones' terrorising buzz  
has gone.

## About the contributors

**Wajeedah Aayeshah** is an academic geek. A lecturer at the University of Melbourne, she designs curriculum and investigates kindness in higher education. She likes experimenting with short stories, creative essays, bad poetry, and games.

**Dr. Ibtisam M. Abujad** is a Muslim and Palestinian academic and poet, and assistant professor at Harper College in the United States. She conducts research on decoloniality and settler-colonialism, critical race and ethnic studies, women's studies, transnational American Studies and the global politics and economics of empire, and Critical Muslim Studies.

**Jim Aitken** is a poet and dramatist living and working in Edinburgh. He is a tutor in Scottish Cultural Studies with Adult Education and he organises literary walks around the city. His most recent publication is *Declarations of Love* (Culture Matters, 2022).

**Aileen Angsutorn** is a Thai-British writer and photographer based in Perthshire. She is the founder of Decolonising The Outdoors. Her poetry has won the Bold Types Scottish Women's Creative Writing Competition 2024 and has been published in two anthologies by Speculative Books including *Things There Are No Words For*, a fundraiser for Palestinian Aid.

**Nell Attwood** is a member of Sheffield Writers for Palestine. They are an award-winning English Literature graduate who has performed their published poetry throughout Europe.

**Ruth Aylett** lives and works in Edinburgh and has been a political and trade union activist since her teens.

**Fernanda F. Binati** is an active contributor for the Worlds into Words writers' group, with members coming from all over the world. As an EFL teacher, she has carried out ethnographic research in schools around the world, such as in India, Brazil and Colombia, with the aim of promoting literacy, inclusion and critical thinking in English Language Teaching.

**Curtis Brown** is a poet, filmmaker, and multi-disciplinary artist based in London, UK. His poetry has been published in numerous journals, and anthologies, including *Masque & Spectacle*, *Wildfire Words* and *Under the Radar*. His poetry films have been selected for several film festivals around the globe, including Southwark Festival of Words, and Ó Bhéal's International

Poetry-Film Festival. Through his poetry, Curtis is currently exploring why, having been raised a Christian, recent events in Gaza have affected him more profoundly than any other similar events around the globe.

**Elizabeth Chadwick Pywell** has a Northern Writers' Award and was a member of the Out-Spoken Press Emerging Poets Development Scheme. She has been widely published in journals, won the Poetry Society's Stanza competition, was commended in the Winchester Poetry Prize and longlisted for the Mslexia Poetry Competitions. A sampler of her work is forthcoming with Mariscat Press.

**Dave Clinch** is a retired secondary schoolteacher. Musician and singer—uilleann pipes, bodhrán, bones, guitar, whistles. A long-standing member of the Socialist Workers Party and also active in the Palestine Solidarity Campaign for over forty years, Secretary of the North Devon branch. He has visited Israeli-occupied Palestine many times. He has self-published a book of poetry, *The Empty Place at the Table* with illustrations by Liz Clinch, which emerged during the Covid 19 pandemic.

**Bernie Crawford's** poetry has been published in Irish and international journals. Her first collection *Living Water* was published by Chaffinch Press (2021). She is co-editor of the poetry magazine *Skylight 47*.

**Alan Dent** is a poet and critic based in Preston. He is founder and editor of *Mistress Quickly's Bed* and former founder and editor of *The Penniless Press*.

**Anne Donnellan** lives in Galway. Her debut poetry collection *Witness* was published in December 2022 by Revival Press Limerick. Anne's work has appeared in several poetry journals including *Crannog*, *Skylight 47*, *Drawn to the Light Press*, *Orbis* and the *NUIG Ropes Literary Journal*. She was the 2023 winner of the Allingham Poetry Competition. She is currently working on her second collection.

**Annie Egan** lives by the sea in the west of Ireland with her husband and three daughters. She holds a PhD in International Human Rights Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway and works as a researcher. She is new to writing poetry and has previously been published in *The Belfast Review*, *The Bangor Literary Journal* and *The Madrigal*.

**Annie Egan** lives by the sea in Galway with her partner, three daughters, dog, two cats and guinea pig. She holds a PhD in International Human Rights Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights, University of Galway and works as a

researcher specialising in the rights of the child. She is new to writing poetry.

**Attracta Fahy**, Psychotherapist, Masters in Creative Writing NUIG '17. Winner of Trócaire Poetry Ireland Competition 2021, *Irish Times*; New Irish Writing 2019, & placed 3rd in Allingham Poetry '23. Shortlisted for: Saolta Poems for Patience 2023, Jacar Chapbook Competition 2023. Fish International Poetry Competition 2022 & '24. She has been published in many magazines including *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Orbis*, *Stingingfly*, *Banshee*, *Crannóg*. She is currently working on a full manuscript.

**Neil Fawcett** lives in Stockport and writes poems from a shed at the bottom of his garden. When not in Stockport you'll find him in Greece, just wandering about. His work has found a home in *Ink Sweat and Tears*, *Now Then magazine*, *The Best of Manchester Poets 2*, *Western Haiku: A Collection*. *The Recusant*, *Militant Thistles*, *Prole* magazine and a number of other publications at home and abroad. He also won first prize in The Poetry Pulse International Poetry Competition. He recently read his work at The Kardamyli Poetry Festival and The Mani Lit Fest in southern Greece. He also regularly reads at poetry events in and around Manchester, UK.

**Naomi Foyle** is author of ten poetry pamphlets and four full collections: *The Night Pavilion*, a 2008 Poetry Society Recommendation, *The World Cup* (2010) and *Salt & Snow* (2025), all from Waterloo Press; and the transatlantic publication *Adamantine* (Red Hen/Pighog Press, 2019). She is Reader in Critical Imaginative Writing at the University of Chichester, Poetry and Fiction Editor of *Critical Muslim*, journal of the Muslim Institute UK. Co-founder of British Writers In Support of Palestine (BWISP), she is a vocal advocate of BDS—the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel.

**Sam Friedman** is a lifelong activist and revolutionary socialist. He is a member of the Ukraine Solidarity Network, Jewish Voice for Peace, the Tempest Collective, and the Central Jersey Coalition against Endless War. He is an internationally known AIDS researcher and researcher into the struggles of people who use drugs, and has published hundreds of poems and many books.

**Declan Geraghty** is a working-class writer and poet from Dublin. He's had poetry published in *Shanghai Poetry Lab*, *Epoque Press*, *Militant Thistles*, *Cry of the Poor* and *The Brown Envelope Book*. He's recently won a scholarship place with The Stinging Fly Play It Forward Programme, and been awarded a mentorship with Skylight 47 Poetry.

**Priya Gill** is a Derby-based poet who works to help young people feel valued and able to make sense of themselves through language, something which is not always easy. She has worked with First Story and is currently the Chair of Writing East Midlands' youth board. As the co-curator of Writing East Midlands' event to celebrate South Asian Heritage Month, Gill is passionate about representing diverse voices, and seeks to do this through her work, both creatively and pastorally.

South African **Abigail George** is the 2023 winner of the Sol Plaatje European Union Poetry Prize. She is a novelist who has been published in Australia and New Zealand, a screenwriter whose first produced script was a collaborative effort. She is also a Pushcart Prize-nominated short story writer, a Best Of The Net-nominated essayist and poet who believes that writing is both therapeutic and healing. She writes about the human condition and also wrote for a symposium for a website based in Finland for a year. Her blog is called *African Renaissance*. She has published five poetry collections.

**Peter Godfrey** is a writer and musician based in the Hebrides. His first poetry collection, *Grace Note*, is published by Smokestack Books.

**Simon Haines** lives in Suffolk, is a retired language teacher and a folk musician. When he was seven, he won a competition for writing an extra verse to 'Old Mother Hubbard'. He has written poetry ever since. His work has appeared in *The Morning Star*, *Culture Matters* and in Suffolk Poetry Society's magazine *Twelve Rivers*.

**A.H. Fitzwilliam Hall** lives in France. He has spent most of his life working and travelling in various parts of North Africa and Arabia.

**John G.Hall** is a published poet and was the founder of the radical arts magazine *Citizen 32*. He organises local workshops & poetry performance nights in Manchester.

**Janet Hatherley** is a London poet. Her pamphlet, *What Rita Tells Me*, and collection, *On the road to Cadianda*, were both published by Dempsey & Windle/Vole in 2022 and 2024. She has poems in several magazines, including *Under the Radar* and *Culture Matters*. She won 2nd prize in Enfield Poetry competition, 2023 and was placed first in the recent Vole anthology, *Autumn makes me sing*.

**Lynne Hewitt-Martin** holds a BA Honours in Media Studies and Journalism from Rhodes University. Now retired, she worked as a financial and features



writer for various publications during her journalism career, before a career change into marketing and public affairs.

The late **Kevin Higgins** (1967-2023) was a Galway-based poet, essayist and reviewer who published poetry collections with Irish-based publisher Salmon.

**Jack Houston** is a parent, writer and part-time public librarian whose work has featured in *Blackbox Manifold*, *The Butcher's Dog*, *Finished Creatures*, *Magma*, *Poetry London*, *Poetry Wales*, *Stand*, *Wild Court*, and in a pamphlet, *The Fabulanarchist Luxury Uprising*, published by the Emma Press.

**Mike Huett** is a UK writer now living in Penacova, Portugal. He turned to poetry only recently when hospitalised with dengue, after spending a year living in Vietnam. His poems sometimes address his rather challenging childhood, along with issues such as intergenerational trauma and stigma.

**Anne Irwin** lives in Galway, Ireland. Her poems have appeared in many literary journals including *Poetry Ireland Review*, *A New Ulster*, *ROPEs*, *Skylight 47*, *Poetry Bus*, and *Irish Left Review*.

**Jodie Jegasothy** has had a keen and passionate interest for writing since she was a child. She works full time as a retail supervisor but in her spare time she writes songs and poetry.

**Mike Jenkins** is an award-winning Welsh poet and author and unofficial poet for Cardiff City FC. Former editor of *Poetry Wales* and founder and editor of *Red Poets*. He is author of dozens of poetry collections (many in Welsh dialect) with various leading Welsh publishers including *Planet*, *Seren* and *Gwasg Carreg Gwalch*. His most recent book is *For Gaza* (Red Poets), produced with the support of RedKite Print and Mwnci Coch: Red Monkey, with all profits going to Medical Aid for Palestine.

**Gerald Kells** is a poet based in the English West Midlands. He has had a number of poems published in anthologies and published his first collection *LI-51 Poems* in 2019. As well as organising an Arts Poetry Reading at the internationally important Walsall Art Gallery and involvement in the PoArtry Project in Stourbridge which led to publication of *Nine Etchings* with Fran Wilde he has also won several local poetry slams. His story, 'Something to his Left' was published in *Twisted Little Sister* and his young teen novel, *The Net Mender's Son*, is available as an e-book.

**Lisa Kelly's** second collection, *The House of the Interpreter* (Carcenet), is a Poetry Book Society Summer Recommendation. Her first collection, *A Map Towards Fluency* (Carcenet), was shortlisted for the Michael Murphy Memorial Poetry Prize 2021. She has single-sided deafness and co-edited *What Meets the Eye* (Arachne Press).

**Tim Kiely** is a criminal barrister and writer based in London. He is the author of three poetry pamphlets, including *Hymn to the Smoke* and *No Other Life*, and his work has appeared in *Magma*, *Under the Radar*, *Atrium* and *Ink, Sweat & Tears*. He is a member of Poetry on the Picket Line and has contributed to the work of the Poets Versus Collective and Poets for the Planet.

**Phil Knight** is a poet from Neath. He has been published in *Poetry Wales*, *Roundhouse*, *Planet Dial 174*, *Atlantic Review* and other publications.

**Paul Laughlin** is a poet from Derry in Ireland who writes in Irish and English. His poems have appeared in literary journals and anthologies in Ireland, Scotland, England and the USA. He is a Director of The Bloody Sunday Trust and a former Secretary of Derry Trades Union Council.

**Neil Laurenson** co-founded Worcester Palestine Friendship in 2009, and in November 2023 he proposed a Gaza ceasefire motion at Worcester City Council, which was passed. His debut pamphlet *Exclamation Marx!* was published by Silhouette Press and he is currently working on a new collection of poems about Palestine and autism with Antony Owen. Neil has performed at spoken word events and festivals around the country such as Hit the Ode, Word Wise, Cheltenham Poetry Festival and Le bury Poetry Festival. [www.neillaurenson.co.uk](http://www.neillaurenson.co.uk)

**James Lawton** is a father to a toddler, partner to a Scouser, English teacher, and part-time poet. James grew up in Oldham and he currently lives in Mossley. His favourite biscuit is a chocolate Hobnob.

**Gerard Lee** is an actor and writer based in his native Dublin.

**Annie Logan** is a 29-year-old queer, Irish activist. She is involved with numerous organisations including United Against Racism, IPSC, The Bloody Sunday March Committee, Derry Anti-War coalition and others. Much of her poetry is nature-based with undertones of class struggle and anti-capitalist sentiments.

**Michal Lowkain** is a Dubliner since 2006. He is one of the winners of the Bread and Roses Award 2023 and his poems are included in the 2019 Culture Matters anthology *Children of the Nation*.

**Alexis Lykiard** (born 1940) is a British writer of Greek heritage, who began his prolific career as novelist and poet in the 1960s. Lykiard is also known as translator of Isidore Ducasse (Comte de Lautréamont), Alfred Jarry, Antonin Artaud and many notable French literary figures. He has published over 30 poetry collections.

**Simon Maddrell** writes as a queer Manx man, born in the Isle of Man in 1965 and living with HIV in Brighton & Hove. Since 2019, over 150 of his poems have appeared in numerous publications including *Acumen*, *AMBIT*, *Butcher's Dog*, *Magma*, *Poetry Wales*, *Propel*, *Stand*, *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, *The Moth*, *The Rialto*, *Under the Radar*. In 2020, Simon's debut chapbook, *Throatbone*, was published by UnCollected Press, and Queerfella jointly-won The Rialto Open Pamphlet Competition. *Isle of Sin* (Polari Press, 2023); *The Whole Island* (Valley Press, 2023); *a finger in derek jarman's mouth* (Polari Press, 2024) were all Poetry Book Society Pamphlet Selections.

**Kevin Patrick McCann** has published poetry, fantasy stories and a novel aimed at children. His most recent work is *The Haunting: Deleted Scenes* (Culture Matters).

**Stuart McFarlane** taught English for many years to asylum seekers in London. He has had poems published in several online journals

**Alan McGuire** is a former mental health nurse from Swindon. He currently lives in Madrid teaching English.

**Jeannie Wallace McKeown** is a South African poet, writer and editor and has published widely in journals and anthologies. Her first collection, *Fall Awake*, was published in 2020 and her upcoming collection is due in 2024. Now enrolled for a PhD in English (Creative Writing) at the University of Pretoria, she is fascinated by the intersections of colonialism and capitalism which have created the Anthropocene, and its impacts on human and nonhuman kith and kin both generally and on a more personal level.

**Mia Maria** is a poet and dancer from Sheffield.

**Alan Morrison** is author of twelve poetry collections, most recently *Anxious Corporals* (Smokestack, 2021), *Wolves Come Grovelling* (Culture Matters, 2023), and *Rag Argonauts* (2024). He is founder and editor of *The Recusant*, an Associate Editor and book designer and typesetter for Culture Matters. He selected and co-edited the Palestine Book Award-winning *Out of Gaza* (Smokestack, 2024).

**Nick Moss** is an ex-prisoner, published poet, reviewer and playwright. Poetry collections: *Swear Down* (Smokestack Books, 2021) and *Shooting to Kill* (Culture Matters, 2024).

**Jade Mutyora** is a neurodivergent writer of Shona Zimbabwean and British heritage. As well as poetry, she writes novels for young adults, short fiction and nonfiction. Her work appears in *Fourteen poems*, *Spelt Magazine*, *SINK*, *Juno Magazine*, *ADDitude*, *Scholastic's 'Bedtime Stories: Beautiful Black Tales from the Past'*, *Queer Out Here*, *Lolwe* and others. In 2020, she won first prize in Nottingham Writers Studio's short story competition. Jade's novels have been shortlisted for Northern Writers' Arvon Award and Longlisted for the SI Leeds Literary Prize. She is represented by Abi Fellows at DHH Literary Agency.

**Jane Newberry** is a children's writer yearning to be a grown-up poet. She is best known for the collection *Big Green Crocodile* (Otter-Barry Books), nominated for a CLIPPA award in 2021. *Hoyden's Trove* (Wheelsong Books) is Jane's debut collection and she is widely published in magazines and on the internet.

**Jeanna Ní Ríordáin** is a translator from West Cork, Ireland. Her poetry has appeared in *Quarryman*, *Drawn to the Light Press*, *Swerve*, *New Isles Press*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*, *Burrow*, and *Otherwise Engaged Literature and Arts Journal*.

**James O'Brien** is a prize-winning playwright, poet, film-maker and political activist. He was made an Honorary Member of the N.U.M during the Miner's Strike, 1984-85. He was the P.C.S. Branch Secretary at Tate Modern from 2000-16 and led the series of strikes which characterised the Tory years of austerity, the Financial Crash and the ongoing attack on worker's rights and pay. Notable works were performed by the legendary agitprop theatre company, GIRO (1984-97) of which he was Artistic Director. Notable works include *The Irish Decalogue-The Famine to the Butchers*; *The Giro Trilogy* (including award-winning 'The Lost Giro'); *Rachman*, and *Fear and Loathing in the Welfare State*. His films include; *Malaise*, *Allende*, *Play: Nice*, and *Rendition*. His poetic works include: *1986 and other poems*, *The Sacrifice Zones* and *The Lucky Last at the Terminal of the dead*.

**b.c. pellegrini** is a queer nonbinary writer and activist from Italy. Their poetry has appeared in the anthologies *Songs of Revolution: poems against oppression* and *2025 Poetry Diary* by Sunday Mornings at the River and the *Humans Rights Day Anthology* by the Moonstone Arts Center.

**Ciara Peters** studied English and Media in Mary Immaculate College, and did a post grad in Journalism in the University of Limerick. She has been freelancing for a number of years and has had articles published in *the Irish Times*, *Irish Theatre Review*, *Film Ireland*, *Visual Artists Ireland*, and *the Limerick Leader*. Her poetry has been published with *Skylight 47*, *Sparks Literary Journal*, and *The Galway Advertiser*. She works as a Technical Writer in Galway. 'I Wear This Grief Like an Amulet' was previously published in *the Galway Advertiser* in July 2024.

**Yana Petticrew** is a poet, essayist, and organiser based in Glasgow, Scotland. Their work primarily concerns working-class culture in the West of Scotland, queer musicology, working in hospitality, cups of tea, and teeth.

**Wendy Pettifer** has been writing poems since her early teens but never had time to focus on them whilst working as a Legal Aid lawyer and mother. She has self-published two books of poems, *Lovelines* and *The Witching Hour*. She has worked with refugees in the Middle East and Europe. She writes about both the personal and political, often combining the two. She reads at poetry and political events in and around Hackney and is currently working on her third collection.

**Colin Pink** is a poet based in London. His work has appeared in a wide range of literary magazines and in two poetry pamphlets and two full-length collections.

**Gabriel Rosenstock** was born in postcolonial Ireland and is a poet, haikuist, tankaist, translator, playwright, novelist, short story writer and essayist.

**Michal Rubin** is an Israeli living in Columbia, SC. In her writing she wrestles with being an Israeli and witnessing the devastating Israeli response after October 7th. In her most recent work she engages with Palestinian poetry as well as dialoguing with Palestinian poets via poetry, her way of joining the struggle to stop the genocide and arrive at a just peace. Her poetry has been published in many journals, a chapbook was published by Cathexis Northwest Press in 2024 and a full manuscript will be published early 2025.

**Chrys Salt** has authored 8 poetry collections, books and plays, and performed across the UK and Europe, India, Africa, Australia and Yukon. She is a recipient of awards and bursaries (various) and in 2014 was awarded an MBE in the late Queen's Birthday Honours List for Services to The Arts.

Before completing an M.A. in creative writing at Manchester University, **Stephen Sawyer** had worked as a naval rating, bar tender, painter and decorator, actor, stand-up comic and, most recently, as a university lecturer in the social sciences. His writing reflects the sharp edge of the North where he was born and raised. He lives in Sheffield and teaches creative writing and English skills in the community. His debut collection, *There Will Be No Miracles Here*, was published by Smokestack Books in 2018. His new collection, *Carrying a Tree on the Bus to Low Edges*, was published by Smokestack Books in 2024. Stephen is a member of Sheffield Writers for Palestine

**Janet Sillett** is a socialist who has had poems and short fiction published in a wide variety of magazines and online. She's a secular anti-zionist Jew.

**Steven Taylor** lives in London. His poems have appeared in a range of publications and he was one of the winners of this year's Culture Matters Bread and Roses Competition.

**Violet White** writes political and/or interpersonal poems from a Christian perspective. She has written on the so-called War on (really of) Terror, Guantanamo, WikiLeaks, CIA Torture, War, Corbyn, Palestine etc. Her poem on the self-immolation of Aaron Bushnell was shortlisted for the Plough Prize this year. She belongs to three poetry groups in North Cornwall; Indian King Poets (with whom she has a pamphlet, *We Speak Crisis Here*), Garmoe Poets and Poetry at Lunchtime.

**Jonathan Wonham** is a Glasgow-born poet who lives in the UK. His poetry can be found in magazines and anthologies as well as the following books: *Poetry Introduction 7* (Faber and Faber), *Steel Horizon—North Sea Poems* (Incline Press), *Ordinary Others*, *Vulgar Variants*, *The Lady on the Plank*, *Until Independence Day* and *Without You!* (Drizzle-Dazzle). All of his poetry collections are illustrated, either by Suzanne Smith or by his brother Nick Wonham. A book of poems about the war in Gaza, *Ceasefire Now!*, was published in December 2024 by Drizzle-Dazzle, all the proceeds will be donated to Palestinian aid charities.

**Mantz Yorke** lives in Manchester, England. His collections *Voyager* and *Dark Matters* are published by Dempsey & Windle, and *No Quarter* by erbacce Press.

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Anne Donnellan: 'Saint Patrick's Day 2024' was previously published in *Cassandra Voices* March 15th 2024.

Annie Egan. 'I Am Not Writing Another Poem About Palestine' first appeared in volume ix of *The Madrigal* entitled 'Dissonance' in January 2025.

Sam Friedman: 'From every river to every sea' was previously published on *Rosa Luxemburg and other poems—IMHO Journal* September 22, 2024. 'Ode to an encampment' on *Tempest* (tempestmag.org) June 24, 2024. 'Civics lessons for moral jurors' in *What Rough Beast* p. 17, 18 October 25, 2024.

Janet Hatherley. 'Ghazal: no surviving family' was published on Culture Matters, April 2024. 'If Jesus came again she'd be born a Palestinian' was published on Culture Matters, January 2024.

Kevin Patrick McCann. 'In Gaza' first appeared in *The Communist Review* 110.

Since the start of the genocidal war by Israel against the Palestinian people, poems have flooded in to Culture Matters. We have published many of them online, to show our solidarity with the Palestinians and the huge numbers of people in Britain and across the world who have marched in protest against the murderous nature and horrifically disproportionate scale of the Israeli offensive. We have marched to the now familiar chant from which this book gets part of its title.

Now that there is a glimmer of hope that peace, however fragile and precarious, is beginning to break out, we have put together another kind of march of solidarity: an anthology of poems from 70 poets responding to the catastrophe of the past 15 months. They vary in tone, style and message, but are all great examples of successful political poems— skilful and eloquent expressions of protest, anger, sadness, compassion and a burning desire for justice and peace.

After production costs have been met, all money received will be given to the Medical Aid for Palestinians charity, to help build an effective, sustainable and locally led healthcare system for Palestinians.

*This is poetry in the face of horror. It's a poetry that investigates how it is we live in a world in which there is a shocking contrast: the normality of living here and the beyond-cruel normality of the mass killing in Gaza. While others have stayed silent, it's a poetry that is not afraid to speak.*

—Michael Rosen

