



We Are All Palestinians

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



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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.

Ibtisam M. Abujad

Recipes for Record Righting

When I began to write,
my ancestors taught me to record recipes.
In your books, they spoke out,
take it down,
salatabildamma is when sulta sounds snake-like,¹
long and deceptive, like the sand paths in 1948

It is staunch walls and boundaries,
cords and accords,
and Unbinding UN (dis)agreements and tra

de contracts
checkpoints and mic checks
borders, orders, hordes
boundaries, bound hands, not ever homeward bound

They said, in a shelter in Balata, you don't escape the eyes,
Even in camps, sirens and smoke rising, uprisings in rotundas and squares,
unraveling lives,

ضمة if you listen carefully you hear the hoot of birds migrating,²
Fleeing sounds like a beating,
no, fleeing sounds, like a beating
The damma an uh in hurt, no may be like oh in court,
corrupt not court,
no trial or may be no lawyer for children like Ahed Tamimi

A soft "u" like in Muslim surahs
Ibada, not eebada, like worship,³
Not like warships
The words sound the same in English

Damma, arms around children's bodies,
ضمتها⁴
I must be wrong, it means bearing arms, arming bodies, alarming children
ripped from امه⁵ضمتته
Dam, destruction,

ندمدعليهم بهم⁶

سُلطة بالضمة سُلطة صوتها/سوطها كفتح الافي¹

²short Arabic vowel that curls back into itself

³إيادة, not genocide, like عبادة

⁴His mother embraces him.

⁵ripped from his mother, incorporation/belonging in armies

Records from ruins,
nourish then ⁷الانام,
Listen, they said,
when we write, we right



⁶This is excerpted from a Qur'anic verse discussing the powerful arrogant nobles in the contemporary Arabian Peninsula who conspired and murdered the holy camel of prophet Salih that nourished, with its milk, the tribespeople. They divided the camel amongst themselves and consumed it to exercise their hegemony and prove their rule. In doing so, they destroyed and consumed the good that would come to their people, therefore heaping destruction onto themselves (91: 14).

⁷Nourish, then sustain (humanity)

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 undeclining 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 Laursen

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 'falastinibachchekeliyeleri' 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, with image above by Banksy

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

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.

Acknowledgments

Jim Aitken. 'Beneath the Rubble' was published by Culture Matters. 'Uday, One Day' has been published by Culture Matters, Scottish PEN, The Scottish Poetry Library and the Hands Up Project.

Alan Dent. 'Mowing the Lawn' previously published in *Mistress Quickly's Bed*, and set to music by Paul Brown.

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

