OLGA CASS

I wrote these poems ten years ago in Devoto Prison. I was a political prisoner, a prisoner of the Military Junta then occupying Argentina. Those years were very hard for thousands of women; even harder for those like myself, who were mothers in absentia.

We wanted to keep whatever relationships we had, had time and opportunity to build with our children. Among each other we exchanged poems, children’s songs, drawings. The focus was constant portrayal of love for our children. A portrayal they could see, could know we created a ‘bank’ of poems, songs, we created with drew sent all we could.

Of course, a creation, a source, a tool for loving nurture was illegal. We, most of us, had notebooks. Many were confiscated in searches. A poem about a red butterfly could be political; a dangerous metaphor of perilous purpose. Much of the mail was lost.

Now I sometimes read to my daughter the same poems. Many of them she remembers. A memory that now has to span language. The kind of memory that seems able to.

I asked her collaboration in adding to the bank. I asked her to draw two of the poems.

To Tatiana

Dove, you that can fly free through the sky take my smile to my sweet child.

Dove, you that can, tell my sweet child that I’m building, ships stars and a long Train Where all children can take a ride

Dove, you that can, tell my sweet child that I’m sending kisses with you.

Dove, you that can, tell my sweet child that she must be strong very soon El dia de la Libertad comes

To My Child

In errant flight of a butterfly and in the firefly my eyes sweep through blue sky and although you are far away my sweet child It is for you my hands are wind my lips are sun to give you tender kisses love