

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 to 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 día 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

