

SUSU JEFFREY

No Expectations/Two Demands/How Do We Help?

For the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women

No expectations.
I try to have no
TV o.d.
 Son of God Sunscreen
 no questions asked
 assumptions of authority
in my universe
we are trying to protect
a four acre
federally protected
wetland.

These people
cannot hear the trees.
They want
something they will never get
enough of
because there is a hole
in them.

Two demands.
 I didn't want any
Commandments
but going to Beijing—
no more research
on what the ants say
as they pass each other,
no more research
on pornography and child abuse
zero tolerance
no more
study war
no more.

I take
the right
to say yes
to take the frame off
 the question.
Speaking depends on listening.
I will say it
once
 not love
equal trade
among us.

How do we help?
How do-you-do?
Rigoberta Menchu says
Listen to poor people.
They have some really good ideas.
Look at what they survive.
Take the dirt fill
out of the wetland
if you expect the lake
to live.
The story
helps remember the place.
Tibetan Diaspora
women gift us
with traditional
white scarves
 for the journey
they cannot
get visas
or practice Tibetan Buddhism—
Tibetan women get sterilized.
Screams of women raped
echo in the vacuum
of Final Solutions.

Not long ago
they sold people
the way they handle
property.
We resist genocide.
The doing makes a difference.
Women must speak
 not like computers—
 with only no
or yes
we move ourselves
 millimetre by ah-hum
rewrite the law
beyond a grocery list
 of slippery *verboten*
and plant trees
and listen.

Susu Jeffrey has had several books of poetry published, including Gonzo Prayers and Everything I Told You Before Was a Lie But This is the Truth (Homeward Press). She lives in Minneapolis.