

and present, its religious standards, and how it is coping with hatred, anger, and resolution. The chapters explaining history are long, but what comes out of that history is awareness of the dozens of dynamics that are happening on four continents. Paris doesn't simplify down to just one dynamic.

The chapter regarding Africa and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is notable: it was while reading this chapter that I realized that theological language, involving words like repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, was being used to express concerns and that it had been used throughout the book, although to a much lesser degree. Collective guilt is another issue on which the book comments at length.

This book is a valuable book. No matter where we stand in relation to the atrocities of our own countries, this work will assist us in a new and broader understanding.

A CHORUS FOR PEACE: A GLOBAL ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY BY WOMEN

Marilyn Arnold, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Kristen Tracy, Eds.
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BY MEGAN HILLMAN

Though not intended to address any particular act of war or any specific act of violence, the publication of *A Chorus For Peace* is particularly apt at this moment in time, a moment in which a "global war on terrorism" is being waged, a moment in which civil liberties are being curbed in the name of "homeland security." This anthology of poetry, which speaks about domestic and international violence, and which gives voice to

the horrors of war and the pains of its aftermath, claims a space be recognised for women who are its victims, its witnesses, its critics, its survivors. While it is disappointing that the editors do not offer an examination of the position/ing of women's voices within non-violence discourses in their introduction, they do argue for the necessity of listening to women's experiences of violence because they "are too often the helpless victims of that violence." But rather than seeing women as passive in the struggle for peace, what Adrienne Rich has elsewhere called being "muffled in silence," *A Chorus For Peace* is a global gathering of women's voices—whispers, cries, songs, shouts for peace—which demand to be heard and joined.

Divided into eight sections which address such themes as the place of children, motherhood, and nature in war, domestic abuse and sexism, the volume opens with Kate Daniels' "War Photograph," a poem which describes the arresting image of a child, surrounded by the carnage of war, running towards the camera—running to us, the observer, another continent away. Like many in the collection, the poem asks for our participation and requires recognition of our culpability, ending with the haunting lines: "How can she know/ what we really are?/ From the distance, we look/ so terribly human." Many of the poems are difficult to read precisely because of this: they offer little solace, they do not traverse well-worn narrative paths. Indeed, this is not a collection of poems which merely repeat that violence is a negative state; instead, the poems here explore the greater complexities and ambiguities of what it means to live amidst violence: the position of the spectator who is able to turn away; the inability of children to maintain their innocence yet who still find relief in their imaginations; of mothers coping with the every-day details of life, insisting their children wear clean underwear lest they bring shame to the family, while

at the same time singing a mother's lament for a better world; of daughters who long for their mothers but who cannot communicate with them; the intense frustration of wasted time, of wasted space, of wasted lives.

The emphasis on nature in the poems—its constancy, its beauty, its purity—offer to the reader a profound sense of hope in the face of despair, and the final section of the anthology, centring on forgiveness, reminds us that grass grows over the killing fields, that there are still those in the world who believe in non-violence, that peace is an attainable, if delicate, state. By bearing witness to the brutality of humanity and by speaking out against the violence in their lives, the poets collected here demonstrate their courage—rejecting, by the very act of writing, the possibility of being destroyed by the violence around them. As Gloria Gervitz insists, "I am intact."

Scanning a wide spectrum of historical violence and mapping an atlas of pain, the editors have selected poems which index the spatial, temporal, and indeed cultural differences of women's experiences of violence, while also blurring such differences by making no reference to the nationality of each writer. Individual and national narratives are woven together to speak a collective voice of anger, fatigue, optimism and hope, writing in a new grammar which articulates the refusal of women to be silenced in war. They remind us that peace is not merely the absence of violence but a "tangible presence," one which must continually be spoken and reinforced. They remind us that women everywhere are vital in the struggle to end violence, and they encourage women to lift up their voices, for as Meiling Jin writes in "Judgement," an international anthem for women, "My poems are all jagged at the edges/ because I am a woman/ who is jagged at the edges/ I speak only of what I know/.../ a cry for justice./ It shatters the universe."