

POEMS



FOR  
PALESTINE

° VOLUME 2 °



## Acknowledgements

Thank you for supporting Poems for Palestine. This collection supports Hajar Ibrahim's GoFundMe, dedicated to providing aid and rebuilding homes in Gaza.

As of January 2026, an estimated 71,000 have been killed by Israeli forces, and a further 171,000 injured. Ibrahim's GoFundMe has supported 180 families in Gaza, distributing vital supplies of food and water to those in need.

Whilst some of these poems may not directly address the ongoing genocide in Palestine, we hope these words and your donation will bring some relief to those in need.

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Cover design by Brigette Gendron.





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## بين العدالة والطيور

“Between justice and the birds”

Marjan Khatib

هذه ليست قصة عدالة  
فأين العدالة التي نراها في امتنا  
تطل علي طيور الموتى من سمائها  
فاخجل ان اكتب عنها كذبة  
بينما امطار العدو تسقط علينا  
يا شهداء الله  
كيف لي ان اتكلم عن العدالة  
و انتم شاهدون لبحر الظلم بيننا  
لا اراكم ولكن  
اسمع اصواتكم وهي تنادي  
يا امتنا أنقذينا  
فيا شهداء سامحونا  
العدالة الحقيقة في يد الله  
أمل ان اراكم في جنته  
ولكن طيوركم التي لم تطير بعد  
الا يحق لنا ان نغير احوالها  
قبل ان تطير كل الطيور  
و تذهب زقزقة الصباح معها  
قادتنا و جيوشنا مثل التماثيل  
كأن اذرعهم قد قطعت  
او افواههم قد كملت  
يا شعبنا لا تدعوا  
قلوبكم تصبح كالحجارة  
تكلّموا و ادعوا ربكم  
ان يجمع قلوبنا  
على حب العدالة و المساواة  
فما الذي سينقذنا بعد ان  
قست قلوبنا كلها

This is not a story of justice  
For where is the justice that we see in our nation  
The birds of the dead look down upon me from their sky  
So I become ashamed to write about them a lie  
While the rain of the enemy falls upon us  
Oh martyrs of God  
How can I speak of justice  
When you are witness to the sea of oppression between us  
I do not see you but  
I hear your voices while they call  
Oh our nation save us  
So oh martyrs forgive us  
The true justice is in the hands of God  
I hope to see you in his paradise  
But your birds that have not yet flown  
Do we not have a right to change their situation  
Before all the birds fly  
And the chirping of the morning goes with them  
Our leaders and armies are like statues  
As if their limbs have been cut  
Or their mouths have been masked  
Oh our people do not allow  
Your hearts to become like stone  
Speak and pray to your Lord  
That He brings our hearts together  
On the love of justice and equality  
For what will save us after  
All our hearts have hardened

## Bring them Back (A Response to Carol Ann Duffy's 'War Photographer')

Isaac Brown

'a hundred agonies in black-and-white  
From which his editor will pick out five or six  
For Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick  
With tears between the bath and the pre-lunch beers...  
And they do not care,'

That's all very well and said, Ms Duffy  
But my eyeballs are tearing up, n' I'm wishin'  
I could be of some assistance  
N' the fact is, my thoughts alone don't aid the resistance.

I know that Talal Abu Rukbah's friend was shot down seeking flour sacks.  
His body was found covered in blood, Israel had "called for a pax",  
But I couldn't stall the bullet tracks  
And I can't bring his life back.

I know that Ahmed al-Batniji died of starvation  
His mother Hanna prayed for resuscitation,  
'a young boy with his whole life ahead of him'  
But I couldn't save him, I couldn't bring his life back.

know Isma'il al-Jarjawi was in the schoolyard,  
When her father and brother were shot down  
She saw their dismembered bodies on the ground,  
And I wish I could bring their lives back.

know there are countless inventories,  
Of children losing families, story upon story  
Lives now lost arbitrarily,  
And I wish I could bring them back.

The thing is, Ms Duffy, I know you don't mean to be  
Against the resistance of genocide  
But how can I 'bring the river to the sea',  
My deeds alone don't solve things magically  
And I can't bring them back.

Pray  
Amabel  
Henderson

Starlings are flocking to the spire  
that tells us where the wind is blowing  
The sky is pink and blue like bruises  
It's the summer evening of your dreams  
baby, a tapestry  
They say that birds are arrows of the wise  
I will tell them to drift into you.

The Map  
Amabel Henderson

there was once an unseen  
outburst

as if his whole body were being scattered like pieces of dust  
settling into corners across the contours  
shimmering treacled stones set into the floor  
is not a room a landscape  
is not my mind a country  
is not my skull a borderline

## Ashes Over Gaza

Clarissa Alves

The earth shakes with children's screams,  
their laughter buried in concrete dreams.  
Small hands frozen under stone,  
a doll's eye stares, shattered, alone.

No mercy falls from the iron sky,  
only fire where the innocent lie.  
No justice, no law, no God, no plea,  
only silence swallowing the sea.

This is not war.  
It is slaughter bound,  
a cage of smoke,  
a burial ground.  
Bombs devour hospitals.  
Schools collapse in flame,  
and leaders spit "defense"  
to mask their shame.

Netanyahu sits on a throne of skulls,  
his crown forged from the cries of gulls  
that circle mass graves by the shore,  
while the IDF counts kills  
like keeping score.

Each strike a sentence,  
each death a decree,  
whole families erased  
like they were never to be.

The streets run red where the children played,  
their bodies in pieces, their names betrayed.  
Brothers and sisters torn apart,  
blood on the walls, ash in the heart.  
Mothers clutch fragments, not whole sons,  
fathers bury shadows of everyone.  
A family once gathered around one bread  
now scattered in limbs, the living, the dead.

And still the world debates, delays,  
while Gaza bleeds for endless days.  
Mothers dig graves with blistered hands,  
their tears mix red with shattered sands.  
Fathers cradle silence where voices were,  
kissing foreheads that cannot stir.

But now hunger claws the bone.  
Bread is ash, and milk is gone.  
Children's ribs rise like broken teeth,  
their bellies swell with air beneath.  
Eyes too heavy, too hollow to stare,  
dreams dissolve into whispered prayer.

A mother stirs a pot of stones,  
pretending soup for starving homes.  
A father counts his child's thin sighs,  
watches hope fade from hollowed eyes.  
A boy licks dust from the floor,  
a girl counts crumbs and asks for more.

The bombs kill fast.  
Hunger kills slow,  
a cruelty colder  
than fire can know.

What monster dares call this victory's name?  
What state survives  
on a legacy of shame?  
History will carve it deep and wide.  
The blood of Gaza cannot hide.

Yet from ash, a whisper climbs,  
a defiance woven through the crimes.  
We are not erased. We are not small.  
Our blood is seed.  
It feeds us all.

## Evade

Amabel Henderson

unable to be saint  
unwilling to be monster  
love hides passion  
to save the other

## Loss // Retrieval

Amabel Henderson

yes, this  
emptiness now  
walk the long gone corridor  
heels, clack  
empty beaches  
bag strands in the wind  
the soft form of your body  
left impressions  
then washed away girl  
bathed in heavyweight pink  
broken drumbeat  
some sick in the reeds  
picture that place  
somewhere behind my eyes  
from a different heart  
all the trees fell down

## Integration

Luis Alcada

The  
British  
Modern  
Pheasant.  
Introduced  
to the island,  
to rolling hills  
and sheer cliffs  
at various points  
(after extinctions).  
Selected from several  
Asian subspecies such  
as gold, silver or blood.  
Carefully carried as eggs,  
placed under a warm lamp  
to be raised in the only land  
they have ever called known.  
Learn to love Scottish waters,  
whisky, accents, heather, haar,  
the deep greens of overclouded  
days filled with promises of rain.  
Connect wi' the native grouse 'er  
a braw wee smoothly burning dram  
and looped a white pendant o' celtic  
knot 'roond their ain proud lang necks

[gunshot]

## Harmonium

Euan Stamper

The lid comes off, bellows unlatch,  
concertina out.

The maker's label says

*Kinnear & Co. Music, Lochilaggan.*

An in breath

Somewhere it is the twentieth century,  
Somewhere the women are speaking Gaelic  
and applying varnish.

Planing for music again.

An in breath

Here and now

the drone is in B flat

The tremolo scratches melody.

We work together to sigh – hoarse as dust dances.

Somewhere it is just a box.

Somewhere it is in a living room,

displacing the television;

the family gathered by the sounding of built gold.

## Compliance

### Iona Imlah

Trying to follow the trail  
of a snake's shed skin  
Its edges too frail to hold him

It flakes between toes and collapses in  
Crumbles to ground, is left like white lichen

The trail is old coats,  
the halves of clothes unworn  
holed linings, shoes beaten

And a forgotten goodbye when leaving  
Expecting return.

Janet

Euan Stamper

Janet used tae gie her auld claes tae ma Maw  
in black bin bags.  
But ma Maw binned them aw  
cos they stank eh cigarettes.

Janet used tae wurk in a department store  
in Falkirk toun centre.  
An' yin time  
she git us discounted things for Christmas.

Janet aye wore loads eh make-up.  
She wis the only person I kent that sprayit perfume.  
Ma Maw wid aye  
ask where she git her hair done.

Janet's git a partner, Billy,  
whoosa bit eh a loose cannon;  
who works early mornin' shifts,  
an' does the karaoke alane.

Janet flitted tae a flat in Grangemouth,  
Maggie fae bingo said.  
Said mibbe there are floorboards  
aneath the bodies.

Janet's in a load eh auld Polaroids,  
sunburnt airms an' Silk Cuts an' perms.  
Her pictures burn holes  
in the faimly albums.

Late December last year, in the wee'oor,  
Janet tried tae take the night.  
Priscription, we think,  
or so we heard the tenement stair whisperin'.

Janet wid aye gie me  
a Granny Smith apple  
when I wis stayin'  
roon' her hoose.

She an' ma Maw spoke  
on the phone the Wednesday efter,  
an' they spoke  
for three quarters eh an'oor

