



### Poetry

Kabul, Afghanistan

October 30, 2010

If poetry is a spontaneous surfacing from depths,  
a release of something lighter than water  
from muck and slime at the black bottom  
of the wide river of our unconscious

If writing is paddling along its banks in starlight  
to gather what is caught in low-lying branches  
and roots of trees at water's edge  
and load it into a canoe  
while cats prowl unseen  
and snakes watch from branches overhead,  
and later, in sunlight, to examine it

Then what is this sharp and polished bone  
that rises in my throat and catches  
every time we exit our guest house in a car  
through the white, metal gate,  
leaving armed guards behind  
to enter the pulsing and chaotic sea of Kabul streets,  
one more bite-sized fish darting out of its crevice  
and joining the flow?

What is this blade I hold now in my hand in sunlight?  
What is this blade that cut my larynx,  
leaking blood into my lungs this morning at the IDP camp  
when men from four families who live there  
led us aside to a walled enclosure to speak,  
families who have nothing,  
who have seen the electricity to their futures cut,  
the light extinguished,  
farmers who have lost their land,  
men and women who have laid children in graves  
after US aerial bombardments?

Where was it made  
and what can I learn from it,  
this knife we call fear?



From the forward by Kathy Kelly:

*"It is not possible to read these poems and remain unmoved. They link us with our brothers and sisters who have suffered and still suffer. With Children Like Your Own calls us to envision a world where people everywhere enter the metaphorical listening tent to answer invitations to talk and hear, thus to find their way out of a violent present into a peaceful future, through the darkness into the dawn."*

To request a book please send a check for \$15.95 made payable to Voices for Creative Nonviolence and send to:

Voices for Creative Nonviolence  
1249 West Argyle Street,  
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Due to the generosity of David Smith-Ferri all proceeds will be donated to VCNV.

**Voices for Creative Nonviolence  
has deep, long-standing roots  
in active nonviolent resistance to U.S.  
war-making.**

**We invite you to join with us as we  
engage in action to challenge U.S.  
economic and military warfare waged  
in the Middle East and Southwest Asia.**

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## A RECENT HISTORY OF VCNV CAMPAIGNS

[Live Without Wars](#) (2010-present) A project in solidarity with the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers.

Delegations to [Pakistan](#) and [Afghanistan](#) (2009-present) The delegations have sought to learn from the experiences of people bearing the brunt of US economic and military intervention as well as make contacts with grassroots movements for peace in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

[Ground the Drones](#) (2009-Present) A project in collaboration with The Nevada Desert Experience, Foreign Policy in Focus, CODEPINK, and Pax Christi USA, as well as forming nationwide network, Ground the Drones is campaign of awareness about and resistance to the US military's use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs/drones) in warfare in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Part of this campaign has included civil resistance at Creech Air Force base in Nevada and Hancock Field in New York.

[Peaceable Assembly Campaign](#) (2009-2010) A nationwide campaign which sought an end to the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and an end to U.S. support of the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories.

[Camp Hope: Countdown to Change](#) (January 2009) A pre-inauguration presence in Hyde Park, Chicago.

[Witness Against War](#) (2008) A 45-day, 500-mile walk from Chicago to St. Paul to build opposition to the continuing war.

[Seasons of Discontent: A Presidential Occupation Project](#) (2007-2008) A campaign of civil disobedience at the Iowa campaign offices of the leading Republican and Democratic candidates.

[Occupation Project](#) (2007) A national campaign of civil disobedience seeking an end to funding of the Iraq war. Over 400 arrests occurred in the offices of



Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers Marching in Kabul

over 42 Representatives and Senators (both Republicans and Democrats).

[Walk for Justice](#) (2006) A 320-mile, 30-day walk from Springfield, Illinois to the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command.

[Lebanon](#) (2006) Voices activists traveled to Beirut to accompany Lebanese civilians intending to bring relief supplies to civilians in southern Lebanon.

[Winter of Our Discontent](#) (2006) A 35-day liquids only fast at the U.S. Capitol.

[100,000 Rings](#) (2005) An international campaign to commemorate and remember Iraqis who have died since the U.S. invasion in 2003.

[Fasts at the International Monetary Fund and at the United Nations](#) (2005) calling for an end to economic warfare against Iraq.

[Work With Iraqi Refugees](#) (2005-Present) Learning from and advocating for Iraqis must remain central to ending the U.S. war in and occupation of Iraq. The international community bears responsibility to provide for Iraqi, Palestinian and other refugees living in Jordan, Syria and elsewhere.

## A MORE IN DEPTH LOOK

We look to history as a guide to learn from those who preceded us and somehow found the ability to form communities of resistance to oppression in Nazi Germany, in apartheid South Africa, and in the Jim Crow South. We also draw on the lived experience of those who have engaged in active nonviolent resistance to the U.S. military might, including draft resistance, the Sanctuary Movement, and the Plowshares resistance efforts.

We ask: what is the appropriate response of a citizenry in a country which has committed unspeakable crimes against a people? Over 1 million Iraqis have died as a consequence of the economic sanctions and the U.S. occupation in Iraq. Tens of thousands continue to die as a consequence of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. And thousands of Afghan civilians have died as a result of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan.

It falls upon us as citizens of the country initiating these wars to utilize all nonviolent means available to stop war. We must engage in the electoral and legislative process, as possible, via protest, march, and demonstration.

VCNV is committed to strategic campaigns and experiments in truth engaging in active nonviolent resistance. Such resistance must take into account that war-making is both military and economic.

We must also move from traditional demonstrations to active nonviolent resistance. We withdraw our collaboration and complicity with this system and use our bodies and lives as a means to create social change. Nonviolent action in solidarity with those in the crosshairs of U.S. war-making cannot be a single day event we make a commitment and act upon it every day of our lives.

**VOICES FOR CREATIVE NONVIOLENCE**

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