

2024
ASHTAR
THEATRE

LETTERS TO

GAZA



PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD
FOR GAZA

This collection, *Letters to Gaza*, is a chorus of voices from around the world—voices that refuse to be silent in the face of injustice. These letters are addressed to Gaza’s people, pain, places, and resilience.

They come in many forms: poems, drawings, songs, prose. Each one is an act of solidarity, an offering of empathy, and a commitment to hope.

From November 29, 2024 onwards, as these words are spoken, sung, and shared globally, they will carry Gaza’s story beyond its borders and continue enabling empathy to be the centerpiece of action. They will remind the world of the humanity that persists, the courage that endures, and the justice that must be demanded.

To those who wrote, and to those who will listen—thank you for being part of this collective act of remembering, resisting, and dreaming.

With gratitude,
ASHTAR Theatre

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Lullaby of Genocide

By James Roach

They embrace their dust-covered,
vacant-eyed babies.
Speak in prayer,
wail in agony,
look for exit wounds
on small bodies
to keep the blood inside,
its river soaking the streets.
Deep breaths don't exist
between the heaving
and the torture of grief.
Their suffering is not lost
in translation, it's right there
draped in the threads of death.
Jungle gyms of boulders
and buried families,
hospitals cut in half
with the blades of bombs,
starved infants die alone
among the lullaby of genocide.
The confetti of broken hearts
is no cause for celebration.

Convenient Empathy

By Elise Cummings

Every day
On social media
As I witness the posts
Of Palestine grief
I see these comments

“That’s just war”
“Actions have consequences
“Do you condemn Hamas?”

Sometimes I click through to their profiles
Trying to understand
What sort of person
Can be so detached
I scroll
Through their feed
And in between the cruelty
There are videos
Of injured animals being rescued
Charity appeals for a sick child
All shared with heartfelt sentiments of compassion
And yet
Somehow
They cannot extend this
To an entire group of people
I go back to the top of their profile
And in their bio I read
“Empath”
“Animal lover”
”Just be kind ”

Pretty words
Empty promises

You Died and I Survived

A Poem on Palestinian dual national survivors guilt in response to Refaat Alareer's 'If I must die'

By Sarah Ollier

Like you asked I lived to tell your story,
the hope I promised lies under the rubble with your things,
But still I bought that cloth and strings.

I'm flying your kite, telling our stories far and wide,
Whilst knowing this pain, guilt and fury won't fully subside.

But by channeling this heavy weight,
I find space for love and hope to fight this hate.

Our memories lie crushed in the dust,
But new stories of justice are a must.

By the time this poem ends,
I've held up my side of the bargain of hope, my friend.

Blessing for the Children

By D'vorah K'lilah

You are stardust and starlight
thick mud and lilac honey
twirling and tumbling, a rock polished in ocean waves
You are a prayer the earth sings to itself
You are a prayer
The curve of a wing turning in flight
The curl of a fern unborn
The spilled seeds, half buried
The turning strand of web holding drops
You are crystal waters moving over granite and tiny points of sunlight reflected in it
the glint in mountain air and the flashing eye of a mountain lion
You are a leaf rubbing bark
a spark swaying from burning cedar
a bubble rising in a turquoise pool
a yellow flower centered in a red cliff wall
Prayers of the earth singing your prayer
You are a prayer, I, the Earth, sing to myself
And this is how I will bless you
As the crescent moon holds the morning star
Your laughter blesses me
As river caresses rock
You are my prayer
As trees sing to the sun
I will sing for you always
When wind dances with clouds
I will draw your name on the dark underside of stone
And drum rhythms of peace in the bark of olive trees
So that you may put your
Your feet on the ground and your back against the tree
And listen to the chant of my heart

More Dead and Gaza Moans

Song Video

<https://youtu.be/DAy1HcVJ4a0>

:

(Lyrics: Dave Lippman. Tune: Neil Young, Four Dead in Ohio)

Jet fighters and troops are coming
Apartheid has really grown
While westerners' hearts are numbing
More dead and Gaza moans
Gotta get down to it
Settlement's taking our town
Should have been stopped long ago
What if you knew us
And saw them blow up our homes
How can you run when you know?
Jet fighters and billions coming
Palestinians on their own
They're losing their land and water
Israelis must now atone
Gotta get down with it
Indigenous people must live
Uprooting their trees is a crime
What if you lived in an
open air prison like us
How could you run when you know?

Lettera per Gaza

By Gionatan Samo

A te,

Non so come starai quando leggerai questa lettera, cosa starà accadendo, dove ti troverai di preciso. Non so come ci si deve sentire onestamente dopo così tanta violenza che accade giorno dopo giorno con la sola colpa di esistere. Sono stato fortunato in parte per non aver vissuto questo tipo di ingiustizie direttamente sulla mia di pelle ma questo tipo di apparente calma sta andando svanendo. Ogni giorno qualcosa di terribile succede nel mondo, non solo dove vanno i giornali ma un po' ovunque c'è ingiustizia, anche nel nostro piccolo.

Io penso di essermi reso conto di quanto fosse sottile questa linea tra lo stare bene e vedere l'orrore quando ho parlato per la prima volta con lei, una tipa qualsiasi a primo impatto ma che ne ha passate tante, più di me sicuro, ma forse più di tanti altri. Vedere gente morire attorno a te, la tua casa distrutta, tutto per casualità e per lucro di pochi ricconi che ci vedono tutti quanti come pedine da usare per i loro giochi. Fa male solo immaginarlo, fa male pensarlo, eppure lei è piena di vita, sogni e speranze.

Nessuna situazione è totalmente disperata, provo a ripetermi anche oggi con gli sbirri che hanno manganellato studenti a Pisa e Firenze solo perché protestavano per proteggerti, per poterti magari un giorno incontrare e imparare della tua vita, esperienza, cultura, sapere i tuoi sogni e le tue speranze. Ho paura ma mi dà coraggio vedere che non siamo i soli a lottare, non siamo soltanto io e te ma siamo dieci, cento, migliaia, milioni di persone che vedono l'ingiustizia e vogliono combatterla.

Ogni giorno nel mio piccolo la vedo, lei, e ci parlo e tutto diventa bello perché il suo sorriso dà forza a tutti. Io spero di incontrarti nella stessa maniera e di vedere il tuo sorriso di forza e coraggio quando finalmente riusciremo a vincere. So che puoi farcela, possiamo farcela e il destino ci farà incontrare. Non vedo l'ora!

A Letter to a Blue Child of Gaza

By Megan Choritz

Dear Blue Child of Gaza

You were never meant to be that colour. You were never meant to die before your first birthday. You were meant to be called by your name, but I will never know it. It cannot be spoken by your family because they are all dead. You are blue because you are dead.

I am writing this letter to you, blue child of Gaza, because even though you are one of tens of thousands of children blown up, bloody, smothered under rubble, sniped, maimed, destroyed, it is the picture of you that will be in my mind until the day I die. I see your tiny body, your perfect face, head, fat little hands. I will remember your body, bundled in warm blue clothes. I imagine the terror and helplessness of being your parents who could not save you, or themselves. Your only crime? Being alive in a world that has turned their back on you. You have paid the ultimate price. And I am so sorry I could not have done more to prevent your murder.

Yesterday I heard children walking down the road, where I live in Cape Town, South Africa. They were laughing and eating ice lollies. They were alive and didn't even know, because why should they, that they were lucky, just to be walking down the street, and laughing. Blue child of Gaza, I thought of you, and how you won't ever get to do that. There is nothing I can say to make this right. There is nothing I can do, except continue to fight for your right to live, even though they have killed you, precious blue child of Gaza.

I think of your smile. I think of you sitting in a highchair eating breakfast. I think of you falling asleep. I think of the countries that believe your murder was justified. I will never forget. I will never forgive. Just know this, blue child of Gaza. Your death, your murder, your blue body, keeps my thoughts unwavering. Palestine will be free. From the river to the sea.

Letter to Gaza

By Cheryl Mok

Thank you for your battle of love
Thank you, for you have freed the mourning dove

Your story is not ours to tell
Yet voices echo, wishful to break the spell
Since when breathing and weaving became prayers in hell
The sounds of whispered silence is where angels fell

Thank you for your trust in humanity
Only to be broken by brutality, barbarity, bloodthirsty society
And so does nature's sanity

Your heart is the beat of life
Your heart is why humanity survive
If only their hearts revive
If only fire is ignited by fireflies
If only the river is not bleeding cries

May our hearts be with your hearts
May humanity awake with the seeds of arts
Long live Palestine, souls never apart
Long live Palestine, souls never apart

Dear Child

By Konrad Suder Chatterjee

Although your eyes are full of dates and olives,
so tasteful, so curious, and smart,

I'm afraid to say you've been killed like
a cockroach in the bathroom of their heart.

Though your mother had you as
a promising asset of your nascent nation,

the other removed you as a demographic
threat to their by force taken location.

Is it true that that mother
would rather see you dead

than... say "Stop!" to her son
trying to have you outbled?

For unchilding you, do I blame the state,
that mother, her son, or you?

How do I write your silenced story
that remains still yours and true?

Whom do I speak to for not telling you
about your damn right to remain silent?

How do I object to it without becoming
a burden, unnecessarily violent?

So... you see, Dear Child, I am an empty
distant promise, full of questions and doubt,

You, be better off, without me, singing
your own song out loud,

You, be better off without me, writing
your own resistance art.

Just don't forget your eyes are full of dates and olives,
so tasteful, so curious, and smart.



Pride

By Kala Samuel Babu Harsha

I don't know how I would react when someone claims my existence—a lie, stating that I should not be here; this body, this land is not mine to decide. Someone far away comes to me and screams at me—'this is not yours, it is mine,' 'this is not correct, this is wrong.' I suppose queer folks, out of all, could comprehend this grief more than anyone.

Our existence is always questioned. I know they say you just cannot feel the pain of the suffering but they forget that if you are human, the feeling of empathy comes to you naturally. I am not the one who is in the midst of war; however, this does not stop me from speaking about the people who are. Solidarity asks for a heart, not blood.

A letter to those stories that are now misplaced boxes of dreams. A letter to those memories that are slowly fading away with the ruins in the air. A letter to those voices that are turned into silence by the explosion. A letter to those eyes that stare at the sky, seeking freedom in the leftover blueness of the clouds. A letter to those lips that thirst not just for water but for their parted loved ones. A letter to those hands that held hands, arms that hugged someone just before their roof fell.

I hope this letter goes to those who have grown wrinkles on their faces because of the pride of their identity—that they are of Gaza, the land that belongs to them.



Letter to Gaza

By Maeve Caley

Dear the Gaza population,

We hear and see your pain that you are forced to endure. You have all faced the unthinkable. In these times of suffering, please know that there are people from every part of the world praying for you. People around the world are fighting for your safety through protests and petitions. There have been donations to provide some sort of aid. As the people who want to protect you, we will continue to act as your voice during these times. I know you are all facing grief that is unexplainable. You are not alone. Even from across the world, people have put your identities in their hearts. We are thinking of you. We are praying for you. We are fighting for you. Continue to pray and focus on whatever good thing you can find. Even if it is small, like meeting someone new. Remember the time will come when you are safe and there is no one to fear. Millions of people are sending you love and comfort during this time. We will continue to fight for your safety, while you focus on protecting yourself.

With love,

Maeve Caley



Lettre à Gaza

By Sylvie Jopeak

Gaza, la forte, la forteresse.
C'est ton nom, ton nom d'entre les âges.

Qui sommes-nous, nous qui t'écrivons?
Deux françaises qui ne connaissent la Palestine que par les rencontres faites au gré des voyages, des missions d'étude, des enquêtes sur la francophonie palestinienne.
Deux françaises qui découvrent que la francophonie palestinienne est un récit à chaque fois différent, une histoire personnelle racontée plus que vécue.
Deux françaises qui hésitent à t'écrire. Que dire ? Qu'est-il possible de dire ? Que pouvons nous dire ?

Où es-tu, Gaza, la forte ?
Tu es dans ton histoire.
Tu es dans ton patrimoine.
Tu es dans ton espace réduit accroché à la mer. Tu es dans ton drame.
Tu es dans tes habitants.
Tu es dans tes exilés.
Tu es dans les images.
Tu es dans la quête, inaccessible.
Tu es dans les mémoires.
Tu es là où nous sommes.

Nous entends-tu, Gaza, la forte ?
Nous parlons la langue des amis.
Nous parlons la langue de l'ombre.
Nous parlons la langue secrète.
Nous parlons bas.
Nous parlons fort.
 Nous parlons pour.
 Nous parlons avec.
 Nous parlons ensemble.
 Nous parlons avec le cœur au bord des lèvres. Nous parlons au monde.

Que fais-tu, Gaza, la forte ?
Tu ne dis rien.
Tu cries.
Tu hurles.
Tu pleures.
Tu as le cœur au bord des lèvres.
Tu appelles.
Tu appelles encore.
Encore.
Encore.
Encore.

Et le reste est silence.



To the People of Gaza

By Braden Dunlap

Dear People of Gaza,

I may not know exactly what you are going through, but I do empathize with you and your families. It is very heartbreaking to hear each day the news of more atrocities being committed against your people, families being broken, and people suffering. You may feel alone and as if no one cares, but the world is watching, and taking a stand for what is right. Many protests are calling for a ceasefire, as well as the leaders of cities, and schools are all calling for a ceasefire to stop the death and destruction of Gaza. People from all across the globe wish to support, and pray for peace and recovery in Gaza. The leaders of the world do not represent the people and it has been very evident through this very conflict. Again, I do not know personally what you are going through, and I cannot begin to imagine the horrors, but we stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza and all of Palestine and stand for justice, peace, prosperity, and freedom of your people. The world is watching, and hears you.



A letter to Gaza

By Tina Strawn

Dear Gaza,

I dream about your freedom and joy every day.

I see us walking together hand in hand

Into healing waters for your people and mine

There will be much rejoicing and laughter again one day.

I will see you at the dance.

I feel it is important to tell you what is happening here. There is great debate, heavy and deep and wide, about if this is a genocide or not. Many of us can't believe our ears, our eyes, and our own minds at the spectacle of ignorance. Their faces are like painted death clowns.

While the bombs are being dropped there, families are splitting apart here. We are tearing our hearts open for you, bleeding your blood all over our parents and friends and the people we work with. We force them to look at you by looking at us.

We are shattered watching you suffer and we feel helpless to stop the slaughter and starvation you experience. We have taken to the streets by the millions. There are boycotts and protests. Many of us have stopped paying taxes because we don't want to contribute in any way to what is being done to you. We will not pay for the weapons that slaughter your children. So very many of us from all around the world, we want you to know that we see you and we will carry your names, your lives, your voices as we sing your victory songs and pray for peace to come. Never again! In your name! You have brought the world together. A courage you should not have to have. I am ashamed of us. I want you to live as much as I myself want to live. And I believe that one day, again, you shall.

We weep for your babies and for your elders. We do not want to grow old here without you. We know that we are not free until you, sweet Palestine, are free. And because my liberation is bound up with your liberation, I vow to remain forever connected to you, and to whatever will get us through to the other side of this madness, this genocide, whatever will get us back to Palestinian joy.

May I continue to feel as connected to the olive trees in Palestine as I feel connected to the mango trees here in my backyard in Costa Rica.

May we continue to stay connected to anyone and anything that wrestles with the questions of why does this blessed/cursed blood run through our veins and spill out from the river to the sea. My commitment to a liberated Palestine, a liberated world from all oppression, is to not look away and to stay connected to you, your pain, your struggle, in as many ways as I can...until all oppressed people everywhere are free.

Palestina libre!

Until freedom,

Tina Strawn



Letter to Gaza
By Supriya Tyagi



Wishes for Gaza

By Maribeth Rubenstein

Mother

You are in a room

Dark and too small

Afraid

I see you

I want to open the door

You are screaming

Calls of anguish

I hear you

I want to soothe your throat

With cardamom tea and honey

You are crying

Tears of sorrow

I feel you

I want to wipe those tears with the softest linen

And hold you

You are thirsty

I want to fill your well with clear, cool water

You are hungry and cannot feed your baby

I want to serve you a feast of all your favorite foods

And your breasts to be filled with sweet milk

Your heart is breaking

I want to bring your family and friends to you

Safe and sound and whole

And make comfy seats for them next to a platter of dates

Under the shade of an olive tree

You are so sad

I want soulful musicians to play the music of your ancestors

Until your body vibrates with the sounds

You are angry

I want to witness your rage

You are bleeding

I want to bandage your wound

You are choking

I want to stop the bombs and bullets

So that you can breathe clean air

And rest

While your babies sleep in your arms

Like seeds on the head of a flower

With your petals gently wrapped around them



Smelling of oranges and wild hyssop
And love
Making the world more beautiful



Masacre de la harina

By Laura Díaz Ortiz

Mientras esperabas en la fila por alimentos,

tu cuerpo sediento y en los huesos,

el corazón roto y cansado,

te arrebatan la vida.

¿Cómo te llamas?

No sé tu idioma, te pienso en el mío ¿Amina, Lupita, María, Josefa, Rebeca, Patricia?

Rostro canela, grandes ojos, nariz erguida.

Abrazada por tu kufiya y un largo vestido.

La infamia crece: sobrevivir a las bombas, la pérdida de la familia, del trabajo, de la escuela, parece que no basta; resistir al ataque de un pueblo vecino invasor transformado por el odio y que te niega hasta lo más pequeño.

Buscando algo para paliar el hambre de tus hermanos de vida llega la ráfaga asesina que te arrebató el aire, el suspiro, los pocos sueños, el hilo de vida que te quedaba.

No sé tu nombre, intuyo tu miedo, percibo el dolor, hambre, desesperanza...

Laura Díaz Ortiz Salgado
Maestra de Danza
Morelia Michoacán, México

Con gran respeto y amor solidario



Letter to Gaza

By Alexandra Monce

To the Dear Nation of Palestine,

Since October 7, the world has been aware of the massive shift in lives occurring at this moment. Everyday, I watch the news and hear your cries for help. The news, social media, and all types of media are covering the nation-wide event occurring. There are boycotts, protests, social media posts, and petitions being put in order to make our voices heard to the government to seek a ceasefire. As a young woman who wants to be a part of change, I am educating myself as best as I can regarding the situation at hand. I am also a nursing student and seeing the lack of medical attention and families losing loved ones affects me greatly and I wish I could do more to help. It is situations like these where I hope to assist others and hopefully make a difference. There is not a day in class where we do not discuss the matter at hand, no matter how heartbreaking it is. Being aware of the issues and tragedies that are happening open our eyes to the real world. We understand that although times are hard, it is important to stay aware and spread the messages that you are all telling us as best as you can. We hear the frustration, cries, and pleading for help as we too pray for a ceasefire. I feel guilty knowing that I am an American, living under a government that funds and supplies actions I do not condone. Your voices are heard and you matter. There are numerous articles, videos, and people that are capturing how crucial it is to address and solve the issues you all are suffering from. We are aware of the situation at hand, and we are doing the best we can to make a change. I pray that all issues will be solved. My heart goes out to all the parents, children, and citizens who are suffering from this disastrous event. From the bottom of my heart, I hope and pray that this will end and Palestine will be free once and for all.

Sincerely,

Alex

Silent Cries, Empty Rage

By Yannaia Veale

The everlasting rage of a mother being torn from her newborn
The relentless aggravation of death clinging to your nose
Tell me where is the hope when bodies pile up without remorse
A child has lived a million lives in the span of months
Bombs littering the sky, but to them they're fireworks
How much longer will the minority be silent
When the lullabies are no longer lullabies but are sirens
That pierce the ears of those who are forced to be kept noiseless
Until the day THE PEOPLE are free
Continue to be in an outcry; "To the river to the sea, Palestine WILL be free"



Letter to You

by Mia Dominguez

Dear Gaza victims,

In light of the shocking events that have devastated and tormented your community, I am writing to express my sincere sympathies and condolences. My heart hurts for the loss you have experienced and the enormous difficulties you are now facing as a result of the violence and devastation that have occurred.

It is heartbreaking and difficult to lose loved ones, to see homes and infrastructure destroyed, and to live in constant fear and uncertainty. Please know that there are people all throughout the world that are in sympathy with you and share your sadness, so you are not alone in your grief. To persist and cling to hope in the face of such insurmountable problems requires a great deal of strength. Your tenacity is an example of the human spirit that never dies and is an inspiration to all of us.

Please know that my prayers and thoughts are with you as you continue to strive toward healing and navigate the challenging path ahead. I hope you are able to find moments of comfort and support from those around you in the middle of all the suffering and misery. May you take solace in the knowledge that you are not forgotten and that a large number of people are supporting and caring for you. I want you to know that you are not suffering in silence and that a lot of people are putting in a lot of effort to support and fight for your welfare and rights.



Dear Hope

by Jheannelle Witter

In a time of darkness, covered skies and loud cries
There are others across the ocean praying, hoping and releasing deep sighs
We know not your pain, but as humans we share the same ties
It is innate to want peace, love and harmony worldwide.

In a time of sadness, stillness and terror
Shouldn't we help you the people of Gaza and your future?
You may ask why do we sit and allow this repeated "never"
It is time for us in the world to stand and come together.

In a time when hope seems far, we want you to hold on
As we fight pen to paper and words to screens, please do hold on
For the mothers, fathers and children - there is light at dawn
As all breaks, let mourning turn into morning and let peace carry on.

Today, writers write to spread the news, and now we write to share strength
We share our words from our heart's length
Solidarity, harmony and love we hope will be tomorrow's present
With peace, solitude and solace, from a concerned student.



To Gaza

By Alliezza Marie

I am truly deeply sorry that you are experiencing these terrible acts, and for these many months. No human should ever endure these experiences, nor should any other human commit these acts onto another. I am sorry that the world has abandoned you, but there are masses of people who believe in the Freedom of Palestine. There are people out there who believe that your right to being alive is imperative, as they constantly spread awareness and speak out in favor of a ceasefire. I am sorry to the children that were born into this environment, and to the children that will grow up without their parents or grandparents. I am sorry to the people who are in constant pain with no medical assistance. I am sorry that this situation has escalated so far. Your culture will not be forgotten. This situation will not be swept under the rug. There will be a moment in time where Palestine is free. You will rebuild and regain strength. But the world sees you, and we stand with you. Please do not believe these actions are in any way solicited. You deserve all the kindness, and respect. As citizens of the Earth we all do.

OPEN YOUR EYES

By Joshua Bulaclac

How come the world has their eyes closed,
They act like everything is ok acting composed.
Not a few people but a whole country is dying,
We as a community need to help and stop the fighting.

Families are being torn apart each and every day,
The once colorful land of Gaza is now painted a sad gray.
A place once filled with happiness, peace, and hope,
They are now declining at a very steep slope.

Genocide is what is happening to the people of Palestine,
The clock is ticking, we're running out of time.
While we sit comfortably in our homes and lay idle,
We could rise and band together to break this cycle!

You are not alone in this time of dire need,
We will not rest until all of you are freed.
Though it may seem that all hope is lost,
We too realize a line has been crossed.

No person should experience what you guys been through,
Time to flip to a new chapter and start a-new.
We hear your cries of help do not fret,
We will work together to solve this threat.

Letter to Gaza

by Elena Pham

Dear beloved friends of Gaza,

I hope this letter finds you amidst moments of peace and strength despite the challenges that you may be facing. Although I am not of the Muslim faith, I would like to wish you all a Happy Ramadan even though it may not seem like a “happy” occasion. I write to you with a heart filled with empathy and immense pain. The struggles you have endured are unimaginable and unbearable. Please do not lose hope during this dark time. May Allah or God (for my non-Muslim friends) guide you through this hardship and shed light and courage on you. I may never be able to understand how you may be feeling but your resilience and determination shines brighter than anything. Whether it be through raising awareness or simply offering a listening ear, please know that we are here for you. We have not forgotten about Gaza and though this genocide has gone on for way too long, please hold on to that hope that you have. It is incredibly difficult to see a way forward but you are not alone. I hope that this letter helps you in any way possible although we are very far away. That hope may be faint, but it is there, waiting to be nurtured and cherished. I pray that there is a future of peace for those in Gaza as well as the many lives of children that have been lost. Remember that you are strong, resilient, and so incredibly brave despite all of the horrors you have endured. Please do not give up. With immense love and solidarity,

Elena Pham



Letter

By Catherine Alvarado

My heart breaks for the babies, parents, doctors, aunts, uncles, authors, artists, and anyone who is a HUMAN in Gaza. No one deserves to suffer how you guys are suffering. I can't imagine what you guys are dealing with; being starved to death, and not being given water causing dehydration which could eventually lead to death. I saw an article the other day that said you guys think people have forgotten and don't care about Palestinians and what you guys are dealing with. We care, acknowledge and try to spread awareness for a ceasefire. I don't want you guys to ever feel forgotten. We feel for every mother who finds out that their child has died in a bombing. We feel for every father that finds out his family is under all the rubble but dead. We cry and feel sympathy for everything that is happening in Gaza. Please understand that you are seen, and heard. You are seen around the entire world. We rally, we pray, we teach about what is going on in Gaza. Sometimes I admire how much you guys still have so much faith. How strong you guys are even with all the loss and mental trauma that is going on. The children that have seen so much are probably never going to forget all the death they have seen. I'll continue to pray and spread awareness to hopefully eventually have a ceasefire. You are loved, heard and seen.

Love Cat,â



To Gaza

by Christian Blair Visto

Palestine, once a beautiful land
Now weeps and tears flow from underneath the sand
The Gaza streets where children's laughter should resound
Now filled with anguish and sorrow, echoing all around

Tears continue to flow, neverending like bombs
Countless assaults with millions of lives in their palms
Homes and cultures are lost and torn
The attacks continue and our souls are worn

A violent genocide, one no one ever deserves
Men, women, and children die in return
Innocent lives are lost
Families torn apart, their cries unheard

Let us raise our voice, for those who can not speak
For those who are frightened, for those who are weak
We must heed the call for those who are oppressed
We stand with Gaza, we must fight back, we must protest

May justice prevail, and a cease fire be called
May peace prevail, and finally be restored
May humanity stand united, to end this so-called war
Free Palestine.



Never Forget

By Alexander Sarabia

To any and all Palestinians,

I am not someone who can relate to the atrocities that are occurring in your homeland, I am simply a college student in America. I, and many of my colleagues, are aware of the genocidal intent Israel has shown since the start of this whole ordeal. I wanted to tell you that despite how it might seem, that the world does not care, that everyone has forgotten about Palestine and all its people, I am here to tell you that we have not. We constantly have you in our thoughts and prayers and I can speak for myself and many, many other college students. There is not a single week, or day, that individuals my age do not share news or other sources of information on social media about events and stories coming from Palestine, and there are many individuals who do this. Not only this, but many of us have also been boycotting large companies that have shown support for Israel, and we know it's working because they have lost millions. I hope that you can see that even we as busy college students, will still find ways to fight back against this ongoing genocide. The message we are sending is clear: that we do not support Israel, and we do not affiliate with anyone who does because we will not stand for genocide and, although we might not be able to directly stop Israel from attacking Gaza, or anywhere in Palestine, we can spread the malicious activities that they have carried out against your people. We will not stop until everyone in the world, including the US, sees Israel for who they truly are: monsters. We will continue sharing stories, we will continue boycotting, we will continue protesting, and above all, we will never forget about your people because they are all individuals, each with their own story, with their own hopes, with their own dreams, and we deeply sympathize with this because we too are no different and no one deserves to be met with genocide. I am here to tell you to not lose hope. Do not lose hope because the world does not stand for genocide, we will not let it happen, it will be stopped, and one day too, from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.

Sincerely, Alexander

Those of us

by Casnel Thomas

Although these times are filled with despair

Just know that those of us are here

Those of us who keep you in our hearts

Our prayers, and thoughts will not depart

Those of us who know and care

Who sympathize and are aware

Of who you are and what you mean

Your and hopes and dreams, how bright they gleam

So think of us, and know we know that we think of you too

And look to the horizon to get another view

Of those of us who stand with you



Poem to Gaza

by Camille Thoennes

In the feeling of fear and isolation
We reach our hands out to you
Your cries do not go unheard
Not your stories unread
In fear we find our strongest hopes



A letter in parts to Gaza

By Isha Kathuria

Dear Gaza,

The different parts of you which we hear of but never been!

That we see on the screens of our devices as we try to piece together the moments unfolding. While the people of Palestine whom you've

traised for thousands of years have been forced to move from their homes to different parts of you. Once. Twice. More than logically needed.

May those parts that are now rubble rise again with the Palestinians!

as we continue to demand for a ceasefire and work towards a FREE PALESTINE!

I hope this letter is or can serve as a reminder of the small different voices across the world that are growing louder now!

For we cannot let you be cut to pieces for the capitalist gains of the imperialists and Zionists.

for your liberation from the Zionists and justice for your people. Since we are not free until PALESTINE is free.

A Letter to Gaza

by Anam Qureshi

Never in my life have I ever felt so desperate and helpless at the same time. I wake up every morning alive, and I feel guilty to be alive. Why do I deserve to live while thousands of Palestinian people are being murdered? Then I ask myself, if I and all the other people around the world who think and claim to be alive, all the people who have the privilege to not have been killed, aren't we all already dead in spirit if we're not doing anything, saying anything, fighting against the absolute breach of humanity that has been happening not just since The past six months but since more than six decades. Can we claim ourselves to be human enough if all of humanity has been lost within us, as if we have failed even as humans?

Today I've come here at Leasread Theatre to give an account of my humanity.

I have come here more for myself than for the people of Gaza — I'm not an artist who could bring about revolution through my art like Tay or Tonto.

All I can do is do the bare minimum as a human and speak up, raise my voice and try to amplify this small voice of mine so that it reaches Palestine and they know that I, Anam, am still human, that I am with them, and even though I will probably never be able to do anything bigger, more tangible, and more important, I will support them.

I will always be accountable to them for my humanity and will always try to be responsible for it and give account of it by whatever means available to me — until I stop being human, until I take my last breath, until I die.

I must live to tell the story of Palestine, and I'll only stop telling this story when I'll stop living.

I am just writing.

By Chaity Bhatt

I don't think I have anything more to do. We say we have the same skies but I don't fear bombs every time I look up.

It also breaks my heart to be sitting down one day and writing a letter, to you, to Gaza, to people who are losing everything and still going on with hope, with faith, with resistance!

I know it's not just land or people or houses that make a place, it is the songs, the poems, the stories, the lullabies, the dance and delicacies!

I am sitting under a neem tree listening to birds and for all I know, the birds have stopped flying over Gaza.

It is an irony that the place that bandages the world with cause is left to just patch itself up.

I see videos everyday of mothers holding dead children, of people desperately digging fallen houses with their bare hands hoping for some life underneath. I see men holding their children, praying as they live for the next hour, it is not poetic anymore and it needs to stop.

We need to stop. We need to stop hoping and relying on the fact that someone else will do it, that some god will do it, that the UN will do it, that someone someday miraculously will do something and this will stop.

It angers me, pains me, hurts me and its words to feel like we cannot do anything but hope and pray.

But we hope we pray and write. We write what we see, what was being said, what was heard, we write the words of resistance, we write poems and we write songs.

We paint the resilience and we fill our drawings with colours so that we see a little of red some yellow a bit of all of green and whole lot of blue to be reminded the world still bright there is still a little light in me and in you

The colourful birds that sing and all those olives on the trees, to be reminded that homes were once filled with colourful curtains and love and laughter, a whole lot of ocean blue, that carried the winds of courage and resilience and that red blood ran through the blood streams of people full of warmth all of which is grey now.

But there will be fire,
there will be life!

we will sing and we will dance again,
we will breathe free, fresh air

we hope we pray that from the river to the sea Palestine will be free and only then, the world will be free

until then, we sing songs of resistance, we shout out slogans of resilience, draw, paint, dance the dabke and mark our presence.

show up, that we were there, we saw, we lived through it, and we

survived! you survived!
we write, we educate, we empower,
we leave it for the seeds we plant
and for that children that sprout,
we leave behind a world, with love, light, colour, and warmth, a world with
peace -with love, hope and strength

Chaity



Genocide Seminar Letter

By Laisa Robles

Dear People in Gaza,

Ever since Gaza was attacked by the Israel Defense Force, I feel sad and mad that you have to endure their attacks every day while Israel decides to take away your homes, rights, and freedom to live. They sometimes celebrate and they win like it's some type of game. They decided to send aid like military weapons to destroy your homes and your historical places. It is wrong because they wanted to build homes for themselves and erase your history. I would hate it if one of the countries decided to destroy my home country for their selfish desires.

I am mad at the world leaders, especially the United States, for not calling a ceasefire or finding a solution to stop Israel from attacking you. Some leaders think what Israel is doing is justified because of the Hamas attack and rescuing the hostages. Some leaders are not trying hard enough to stop Israel from attacking you and destroying your home country. Even though some of the world leaders like the United States President, England Prime Minister, etc. supported Israel, the people in those countries supported you guys by protesting and boycotting companies that support Israel. We know what Israel is doing is wrong because seeing your families being killed and your homes being destroyed when people took videos or livestreams.

I hope one day these attacks will be over soon. I pray to God to help the world leaders to open their eyes and see what Israel is doing that is called genocide. The world leaders should have sent aid to Gaza instead of Israel. I hope the images and videos capture what is happening in Gaza so everyone can see it and open their eyes and hearts to reach out to help. I also hope that Israel is being held accountable for their actions and reparations for you

Dear Palestinian Resilience

By Nur Hikmah

Dear Palestinian resilience,

How are you? I hear of you all the time. I want to wish you are well but I don't think you are. I hear of you all the time. People speak of you in awe and respect, but you sound tired on their lips.

How have you been? It must be difficult for you. How long have you been around? There are people and governments who lie to themselves about how old you are, but I first saw you when I was a young child watching the news about Israel attacking and drowning an aid flotilla to Gaza, so you must be older than Oct 7. I still remember her name, the ship, Mavi Marmara. I saw you in the news then. You definitely looked older than Oct 7.

Have you been eating well? You put on such a brave face everyday but your eyes tell me you haven't enjoyed a single meal — not even a decent one — for decades. If you can find a quiet moment, try to savour a fruit or two. When was the last time you had one?

Do you remember what it was like to close your eyes and bite into your favourite food, which can be something as simple as bread dipped in oil, which I know you will agree to be delicious. Do you remember how it would taste as you sit in silence, the cool breeze on a cloudy day making kisses on your face? I don't know if you can remember how relaxed you were, muscles unclenched. Not tense, completely relaxed. Do you remember?

If you can find a quiet moment, take in a few deep breaths and relax your jaw. Release the tightness in your chest and just breathe.

I know those quiet moments don't come around often enough.

One day you will be free. Free to rest, free to relax and free from the burden that tires you, pulls you down. One day you will be free.

Thinking of you,

Hikmah.

A controversial piece

By Elisa Brunelli

Can a piece about peace be
controversial? And a piece about
intifada?
That might be.
Lying down, overthinking,
Cuddle the drama
Intifada.
A controversial piece for a controversial topic.

I am sitting in my room
Outside is raining
A lot, like really a lot.
'The sky
Is crying.'
Cheesy
I want to write a piece about
Palestine. It's difficult though.
A lot, like really a lot.
'My hands are shaking
My heart is crying.'
Cheesy
But is it?

The first time
I hug myself in a kefiyah
I am fifteen
I read a letter on a lamp post
With a horror story on it
It's about the Nakba

I listen to the reports
From the West bank, from Gaza,
It's colonialism running free
In the years 2000 something

Then the first time
I write a poem about Palestine
I am sixteen
And what I type sounds more or less like
this: *Il mio cuore piange*
Un singhiozzo sordo
Mi strozza
Non possiamo riposare
Liberta' e' solo

In totalita'
Which means:
We cannot rest till we are all free.

So the first time
I write a flier:
Viva viva Palestina!
I am seventeen
The chest tore apart by
injustice And cheeks full of
tears
I count again
From one till four
Occupation no more.

And the first time
I hold her hand,
kissed by the sun in a packed
plaza, I am eighteen
We are young
And we scream again
Against the displacement
Against the institutions
And their absence.
That silence
KILLS.

A young heart filled up with
ideals, Teenager eyes with
burning tears. We stand against
colonization With love for the
world
In communion.
Our voices are loud and clear.
We are eighteen, and we are
sure: There is nothing
controversial.

It is October 2023
I wake up I read
I don't post anything.
The first sit in
I have an overlap in my
agenda: I skip it,



I am here trying to heal my shit.

I read little,
swipe all the videos with crying
kids I am swamped by anxiety
I cannot deal NOW with this

It is October 2023
Bombs are flying, kids are
dying EVERY DAY.
No electricity, no water, no
gas Yet a bomb on an
hospital
And then another one
and another one.

My Israeli friends
are saying that this is really
complex, We shouldn't talk of two
sides. But are we?
It is October 2023
It's too early to talk about genocide
Ethnic cleansing
-Or maybe it's already too late
I am drawn in my drama, my trauma
It's so difficult to take action.
But is it?

A friend of a friend slaps my face:
Western feminists,
We don't hear your scream
You are leaving us alone in this!

Recognizing bad use of privilege
hurts a lot, like really a lot.
Yes it hurts, but who? Me?

Reflection, feminism and
intersection. How many times I've
heard:
It's a bothering topic
I don't have time to read about it
And in the end you know,
It is not really about me.

Realizing that's how I am acting
today It's a cold caress on my face

Because if you stood on the other

side You know
That hearing silence hurts
A lot, like REALLY a lot.

The first time I am left alone
I am nineteen.
I am young,
you were a friend
I'm crying, it's disgusting,
The shower washes my tears
I feel dirty, I am freezing
YES I was flirting, BUT then shouting

Are you sure? It's complex
Are you sure? The truth always lies in the
middle. Are you sure? It's controversial.

It is October 2023
And I start again to scream
Because we cannot rest till we are all
free. But today
Outside it's raining.
A lot, like really a lot.
It is a commensurate response
After a terrorist attack
If you state otherwise you are supporting
 Hamas. Am I?

If you scream too loud
5 6 7 8 Israel terror state
You are silencing Jewish grief.
Am I?

It is November 2023
I want to write a poem about Palestine: A
controversial piece for a controversial topic.

Let's not be that political,
The truth lies always in the middle,
Silence is a considerate path to
follow. But is it?

It's too complex to say something,
Do not hurt the sensibilities,
It's polarising to take a position.
But is it?

It's more than one month
that the war started.



But is it one month?
Or seventy five years?
But is it a war?

It's not that controversial, isn't it?

It's not even a conflict
This is genocide!
Ceasefire NOW!
Stop the ethnic cleansing!

In a system with an unequal power situation If
you don't speak up
You stand with the oppressor.
Let's hold hands
And scream again
Loud and clear:
Palestinians have to be free.

Intifada.



I know not.

By Simon Capelle

I know not the land
of shadows and sorrows for I have seen
in many dreams
the land of light
white and green
and the sky bright
as the smile of
my daughter.

She sat next to me
in the dawn of life
her mouth filled
with words
flowing like water springs when the snow is
melting.

"Is that a bird ?"
Said she.

"I know not"
was my answer.

For who am I
to tell
which one is a bird
and which one is not
which one is death
and which one is not
which one is peace
and which one is not ?

I know not the years

the days the hours
of joy
and blooming flowers.

My daughter smiles
in the glimpses of
the past.

I know not
where she rests
where she speaks
where she is.

My daughter sings
like a bird
passing in the sky.

I know not
the end of pain
the beginning of silence.

For one day I will
sleep in the green fields of blossoming
light.

"Are you a bird ?"
will my daughter ask.

"Perhaps"
will the answer be.



To the People of Gaza

By Naomi Bah

Dear Gazans, dear Palestinians, dear Siblings,

I am writing to you today, to make sure you know that **you are not alone**.

Of course I don't want to deny the reality that you are facing hell on earth on your own and that the global ruling class completely turned their back on you and is not doing anything to stop it! So I can only imagine how alone you must feel in this nightmare. But I want to assure you that we the People, the masses of this world stand behind you, firmly and more committed than ever. Your cause is our cause and we won't stop fighting until this Genocide is over, until **Palestine is free**.

The world is awakening and the global South is rising. The injustices you and oppressed people all over the world have suffered and endured, were not in vain. Your martyrs didn't die in vain. Your land wasn't destroyed and taken from you in vain. It can't be. We cannot allow it to be.

A Palestinian friend of mine told me: „The struggle between Good and Evil will stay as long humanity stays. Hopefully one day the Good will be as organized as the Evil is in this world.“ And that's the role we have to play here in the West: We have to mobilize and more importantly organize, so that our collective struggle for the Good - the **liberation of all Peoples by all means necessary** - will win!

I know I can't offer you much solace, so the only thing I can do is to promise you my dedication, my commitment and my determination to struggle for you, alongside you & with you until we win. And **Victory shall be ours**.

Every night I go to bed and pray for you so lastly I want to share my prayer with you: „**To the People of Gaza**“

~I pray for your Safety and Protection, the Safety and Protection of your loved ones and each and everyone who makes Gaza your home.
May Allah grant you ease.

~I pray for all your Martyrs. I pray that there is a better place than this world and that they have reached it by now.
May Alla make them People of Jannah.

~I pray for all the souls that still have to leave this world. I pray that your transition will be painless, effortless and peaceful. And I pray that you will be reunited with your loved ones. May Allah grant you ease and make you People of Jannah.

~I pray for the People in the occupied West Bank, the People in occupied Jerusalem and the rest of historical Palestine. This is about all of you. I pray for all of your Safety & Protection, all of your rights, your freedom, your dignity and your liberation.

May Allah make us a generation that witnesses a free Palestine and a Palestine that will free us all.

Amen.

In Love and Solidarity, Naomi



My Letters Stamped with Bloods in the Hands of Freedom Fighters

By Ahmad Tajuddin Ismail (Angelo Taj)

Gaza, years ago I lived with you in a love language that only few people knew. It is when they read the stories of Mahmoud Darwish fall in love with Rita, an Israeli woman who is Jewish. Jewish, long time ago they had the most beautiful love language before part of them are Zionist. Gaza, years ago I saw your skies in chromatic blues, blueish that only God told me it is a gift. A gift that no one understands is the skies that melted like honey, a place that flowers will die for. When I see the skies from a hill, I see you knitting all the happiness to the believer of God's words. Gaza, years ago I listened to the music from the tambourine. It is sizzling the sound of your crescent. I guess it is time for me to move on, from all the memories and the fact that there is no Ramadhan. I but I know, God fulfills all the hungriness to the emptiness, with sweetness of unrejected du'a. Gaza, years ago I believed in the existence of a gold bullet is to determine everything or nothing. I don't believe it is to determine death or survival for innocent souls. Existence is a place that uncoffined like a treasure box where God put all the happiness as the glitter to all the unwanted tears. It is heaven. Gaza, years ago I waited for the sound of freedom, I wished that freedom would have a safe sound, I thought about what is the fantom and phantom of freedom. I know freedom is a love language that does not need blood as the trade to all the chaos creatures. In ravenous longing, freedom is solitary. Gaza, years ago I knew you breathe free. The autumn, the season where the sun sets down. To the river, to the ocean, to the life unbordored and uncuffed. Your soil, it is the color of soil, it is the skin of your people redness under the struggle and snatched by times they knew they were disappeared. Gaza, years ago I counted how many new buds blooming in April, how many couples found their love in September, how many rains will fall in November. By the day the new buds become home of bees, it is the day spreading until angel wings unfolded, until mercy comes. Dear you, beloved. Gaza, years ago I thought that life is short to worry about. Life is a love language that beautifully speaks love as a heart that pounds God every time it's beating. Life is a burning thing but in God's words, it is blazing. My letters stamped with blood in the hands of freedom fighters, that is all. My love that I will remember as the words of Gaza, that one day will shine in the ruins and fires. In my country, behind the bars of unity, Gaza will be free, Gaza will be free, Gaza will be free.

P/S – Angelo Taj, from Malaysia with love.

Wednesday, the day of freedom, March 20, 2024.



Awakening

By Courtney Townsend

My Dearest Gaza: Beloved Children, mothers fathers, families, friends

As I sit down to write these words, I can feel the weight of how empty and somehow meaningless my effort to write this letter is. An effort amongst my daily tasks, my children, my struggles of being a single mother and living in Canada with an atrocious cost of living...and then I realize at least I have THOSE as my struggles...at least I HAVE children...at least I HAVE a home... and nothing I write will or could lift the pain and the nightmare of what the occupation and the powers of the world have inflicted on dear, beautiful Palestinethis ancient, beautiful land that Palestinians are connected to, and that I don't believe will ever truly be lost. I watch my brothers and sisters here in the diaspora sink into various modes of depression, action, passion and freeze. I likely will never truly understand the depth of your struggles as Palestinians, but know that my empathy flows like a river, and my heart bleeds endlessly for you. When I wake up and do what before seemed like mundane tasks, making breakfast or driving to school, now defines my attention in a different way....because everything I do, I do with Palestinians and the children of Gaza inside of me. I will never be the sameand I know you have changed the entire worldsomehow this has happenednobody in Canada, not many really knew about Palestine, or the previous wars, I barely knew the details myself, and yet now everybody knows and loves you Gaza. You woke up the world, you sparked a global movement. But I'm not sure the movement is worth it if it means your nightmare continues for one more day even. I don't know what the larger plan is, but I guess that is where faith enters, and you have much deeper faith and relationship with your creator than I ever have. You inspire me. You inspire me. You open me. And you let me feel feelings I have never experienced. I mourn and I cry with you. I feel rage, sacred rage, anger, powerlessness, I wish for so many things. I let my rage move me to do meaningful, helpful things from here in Canada...but I want to scream at some people...to make them feel horrible for not doing more...I can't understand it sometimes.

Im reaching out to each and every one of you in solidarity, in spirit, my spirit and tears drip onto the screen of my phone... and so I do everything I can here in Canada...I talk about you, I protest for you with your relatives, I put pressure on my government, and I cry more, and I talk to my children and show them everything, and I cry more.

In the midst of chaos and despair, your resilience shines like a beacon in the darkness. Each day, as you navigate through the rubble of shattered dreams and broken promises, you display a courage that defies all logic....you are the definition of resilience and true resistance which cannot be separated from liberation. And then I learn that this resistance and resilience has been going on for almost a century on your beloved land...this horror has not only happened to you, but to the land and all the living parts. I watch documentaries on Deir Yassin, and 1948 Palestinians, I watch films like Farha and cry unconsolably, I learn about people like Khader Adnan and Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish and Ahed Tamimi. And so many others both historical and contemporary. I don't think I have ever learned so much, so concentrated, with such enthusiasm, as I have since October 7 2023. I know so much about Palestine and its people now...and I'm so so grateful and happy I know. I also say Gaza properly...I try to say it from the back of my throat, which is closer to my heart. I'm inspired and moved by every detail and new piece I learn about Palestine, its people, its culture, its beautiful parts. And I'm even

inspired by resistance movements such as Hamas, because I can't say that I might not do the same if I lived through what the people of Gaza have lived through and witnessed through the generations. And I have learned so much...and I have decolonized my mind, and I continue to question everything and learn some more.

I wish I could be there to stand with you, to hug you, to be exposed to death as you are, at least that would be a meaningful use of a human life...from the outside, from the western world and its colonial death machine sickness that seeps into everything and everywhere...it seeps into Palestine.

Your unwavering spirit is a testament to humanity. Palestine is a call to the entire human race.

So many worlds lost, each individual murdered, is an entire world lost, an entire potential, and someone's everything. The echoes of loss, the screams of anguish, and the silent tears shed in the dead of night when I look at the sun here, and in the shining sun, when I look up at the moon here...and I think of you....these sorrows, these unending tapestries of sorrows weaved into the fabric for generations to come...its too much to bear. My heart aches as I imagine the innocence of children stripped away by the horrors of conflict. The laughter silenced, the playgrounds deserted, and the skies tainted with the smoke of destruction—they serve as stark reminders of the cruelty of our world. We yell and demonstrate, we continue, through the days the months, and yet those in power are not listening...and I wonder if a human heart can completely burn out through a sick life of power and greed, maybe its possible they just don't feel anymore...otherwise, how could they? How do they sleep at night? How do they interact with their children, grandchildren, how do they not see the faces of Palestinians in every face they look back at?

Yet, amidst the chaos, there is beauty to be found...maybe... there is still always beauty. It is in the laughter of children playing amidst the ruins, the kindness of strangers offering a helping hand, and the flicker of hope that refuses to be extinguished. But I know there is chaos and survival there too.....

And know that you are not alone in your struggle. (God how stupid that sounds) But! There are millions of souls across the planet who stand in solidarity with you, yearning for a world where Palestine is FREE.

In the end, it is love—the most powerful force in the universe— that will triumph over hate. So, let us love fiercely, forgive generously (but also demand justice) and embrace each other as fellow travelers on this journey called life...in our thousands and millions, we are all Palestinian....LOVE will win...we will not stop...we continue to fight for Palestine, and we will continue in this deep love, as we know that this fight is rooted in truth...

Oh!!!!!! People of Gaza, People of Palestine..you are the heart of this awful, beautiful and mysterious world.

Ohh!! People of Palestine, we will continue to resist and fight with love...our voices, our spirits our bodies carrying us grow stronger and louder and our passion for you calls for others to join...we rise against this genocide, and the ongoing Nakba, we rise against oppression and injustice, we rise against the destruction of the land, we rise against racism and fascism and power structures that allow these atrocities to happen...we rise against the hurt people merely unleashing their own hurt onto others, although in the most brutal ways imaginable...



And thank you for providing the rest of us an opportunity to understand who we are in this world, for planting the seeds of LOVE that are RIGHT NOW turning into the greatest forms of justice and truth that we may witness in our lifetimes.

From the River to the Sea Palestine Will be Free. Gaza!!.....Gaza!!....Gaza!!
Long Live Palestine

I love you.

Assalamu Alaikum

أنا أحبك وأنا هنا، من الجانب الآخر من العالم، لكن قلبي وانتباهي موجهان نحوك.



الملائكة تدون الخسارات
تهاني سوالمة

تتركوها وصور طفولتها.
ماذا تيق من حقائق الزمن؟

كل ليلة
تحلم غزّة أنّها تغرق،
من بعيد، يبدو العالم كلّهُ
ألواح خشبية هائلة وعائمة.
تصحو غزّة على تابوت واسع.

لقد صرنا عينة تجريبية
في مختبر الضوء البرتقالي
لخدمة تجربة؛
هلاك مليون حقبة بشرية
في نفس العام.

الأحلام المقتولة؛ هل يمكن تحقيقها؟
ذات ظهيرة شبه آمنة
خرج أربعة أصحاب وسط فراغ
الدمار،
بحثوا عن بقايا بيوتهم
بعد عشرة دقائق، ينهض الموت
للصحو برفقة الطائرة المسيرة،
تقول الأسطورة أنّ بيوتهم خرجت تبحث عنهم
آخرهم سار نحو موته المجزأ
مغمضاً عينيه:

تستمرّ الملائكة بتدوين الخسارات
خسارات تجربة تقتلنا حزناً على الوحيدين،
الرجال الحزينين
وإسرائيل تكرر التجربة لعلّ
الغياب يأكل المدينة
لكن غزّة ستبقى مثل البحر
غزّة جاءت مع البحر والحريّة
وترحل مع
الماء وفناء السلام.

لماذا أرسلتمونا مبكراً إلى كلّ هذا النوم؟
لكن على الأقل؛
ألا يمكن أن تدعونا وحدنا في سجن
علية هذه الأرض؟
لم تكن تريد غزّة أكثر من أن

كانت تريد الشمس
أن تشرق من الغرفة
المجاورة لسجنها،
كانت تريد صباح الخير
قالوا أنّ الشبايبك مفتوحة
لكنّ المواطن الصالح غير
موجود.

الحرب؛ وما من أحد يستطيع

أن يوقفك الآن

كم من السنوات والأيام

ستكشطين من شباب هذه

البلاد وأنت تضحكين!

تفرضين نفسك مثلّ الحبّ

والكره

وتشبهين الأبدية.

غزّة

صديقاتك يكبرن بسرعة

ويهجرك

وأنت تكتبين نصاً طويلاً

عن المخاض

بدلاً عن كلّ الأبناء الذين

تحلمين بهم.

أبيّتها المدينة الزرقاء

برقيبتك التي تسيل دماً

حارّاً صاعداً،

مثلّ شمس صغيرة

تريد أن تموت حتى

تبكي وراء البحر والجبال.

على مقعدٍ فارغٍ يجلسُ الحبّ

وجواز السفر ونشرة أخبار العالم

تحكي عن كلّ الأفاصي

سوى جرحك الذي لا يلتئم.

لا بأس أن تدخني بشراهة

وأن تتلفظي بألفاظ نابية

هذا الكون بيتٌ ميّت.

هل يمكن أن يموت الإنسان

من الجوع؟

منذ خمسة أشهر والخيال يقول:

نعم.

أريحا؛

الحياة هنا تسير بشكل طبيعي،

الجيران البعيدون يحتفلون بواحدة من قصور البلد

يوزعون الأغاني التي كنا نسمعها قبل

السابع من أكتوبر

وأنا أفكّر بالموت الذي صرت أعرفه.

الحياة هنا تسير بشكل طبيعي،

الرجال صاروا يبحثون عن الخبز في حاويات القمامة،

الرجال الذين كانوا يعملون لدى العدو جوعى الآن.

ربما كان رجل الدين الذي أخبرهم

أنّ العمل لدى العدو شيء جائز

- لأنّ هذه البلاد كلّها لنا- يسخر منهم.

الحياة هنا تسير بشكل طبيعي

لكنني غالب الوقت لا أصدقها

وأفكّر كيف يمكن للموت أن يجلس هناك

على بعد مئة واثان من الكيلومترات

مرّة واحدة كلّه في آنٍ واحد



ليس بوجهٍ واحد،

يجلس بدون وجه، يملك الوجوه كلّها.

وعلى الضفة المقابلة يد القاتل الذي يملك كلّ الشرّ،

يحترق الزيتون ويبقى المواطن المسكين

يحمل جمجمته بيده مقابل كيس طحين.

نحن آثمون؟

لا شيء يحدث، لا شيء من كلّ هذا الموت،

نحن فقط نتخيّل.

٢٣ آذار-٢٠٢٤



Untitled.

Submitted by Amal Murad

حتى لو كنت كاتبة لما عرفت ماذا أقول.
حتى لو كنت مخبئة لما وجدت الكلمات.
حتى لو كنت رسامة لبقيت لوحتي فارغة.
حتى لو كنت شاعرة، لماتت الكلمات في حنجرتي.
وبما أنني مجرد إنسانة، أجلس هنا غير قادره على كتابة مشاعري على ورقة.
كل يوم أستيقظ وأفكر في غزة.
كل يوم أخلد إلى النوم وأفكر في غزة.
وفي منامي أرى كوابيس ولكنها ليست مثل الكوابيس التي يعيشها أهلي في غزة.
كل ما أتمنى، أن أستطيع تجاوز هذه المحنة والمضى قدماً.
وأن أعيش لأرى فلسطين حرة، سالمة، وأمنة.
أود أن يمضي الزمن قدماً، حتى أشرب الشاي في فلسطين الحرة.
ولكن بما أنني لا أستطيع ذلك الآن، سأعمل ما في وسعي لنشر الوعي.
سأفعل ما في وسعي للدفاع عن فلسطين.
أنا ليس لدي أمل بل لدي يقين، أننا سنرى فلسطين حرة يوماً ما من النهر إلى البحر.

Even if I was a writer, I wouldn't know
what to say.
Even if I was a singer, I would have no words.
Even if I was a painter, my canvas would
stay blank.
Even if I was a poet, words would die in
my throat.
And as I am just a human, I sit here unable
to put my feelings on a piece of paper.
Everyday I wake up and I think of Gaza.
Everyday I go to sleep I think of Gaza.
And in my dreams I see horrors but
they don't compare to what people in Gaza
are going through.
My only dream is that I could move through
time. I would go to the future where
Palestine is free. I would go to the future
where Palestinians are liberated and safe.
I would go to the time, where we are drinking
tea in a free Palestine.

But while I can't, I'll do what's in my power
to bear witness, I'll do what's in my power
to spread awareness. I'll do what's in my
power to fight for Palestine.
I do not hope, I KNOW that one day
we will see
a free Palestine
from the river
to the sea.



To the women who made the bag that I carry with me every day.

By Lapis Lazuli

To the women who made the bag that I carry with me every day.

I carry this bag with me wherever I go since I got it. In it I carry my notebook and pen in which I'm writing this to you.

On the bag, there is beautiful tatreez, in the colours red, black, white, and green. I carry my whole life in this bag, everything I need in order to be safe once I leave my house.

As I walk out the door and travel through all these different spaces I get to carry this pocket space that you've created, when I carry this bag I'm carrying you too, I'm holding onto you.

My mom taught me how to embroider, she taught me about how all different types of stitches tell stories of our life, the way we pass these threads through the cloth represents our steps, my favorite stitches are the ones that you have to retrace, one stitch forward, and then two stitches back, teaching us about how walking our paths can at times feel backwards, how looking "back" is a vital part in moving forward towards our design.

As I carry this bag with me, resting on my right shoulder, the weight of what I carry inside of it reminds my body that they are there, and therefore reminding me that I'm here, it helps me stay present within the moment, and within memory, I'm so grateful that I get to carry this cultural heritage with me, that I get to show it's beauty and irreplaceable worth, not only this bag and the tatreez, but also you the women who crafted this, I hope that the money I paid for it aids you in life, that it helps you survive the oppression you face, the oppression that my government is forcing me to pay for.

In this bag I also carry a small gift that I was given a few years ago by a dear friend of mine that is no longer with us. She taught me so much about Palestine, about Gaza, I carry her and her love for the land and its people with me in this bag. This bag helps me to refuse letting go, I refuse to let go of you, every time I see a photo, a video, a piece of writing, when I hear your music or the sounds of your surroundings, when I experience these parts of you, I'm being helped in holding onto you. Just like this bag is helping me to not let go, as I hold this bag, as I show my surroundings this tatreez, I'm nestling you in my heart and the hearts of those around me, thank you for aiding me in this. I do not know your name, or your face, but I love you, my love for you is not unlike the love I have for my mother who taught me how to embroider and not unlike the love I have for my friend that passed away.

With this letter I hope to stitch my care for you into my heart, so that even if I were to lose this bag, I'd still be unable to let you go. May your tatreez, and therefore your path, your lived experience, live on, stitched into the hearts of everyone.

Untitled

By Aurora Ala-Hakula

You talk about the silence you have experienced since October. About the silence that followed the death of an 18-year-old cat on your street. The body of a bombed cat lying on the street. No more humming, purring, squealing, no more flashes of light reflected by shiny fur on the walls of the house. You said you would no longer hear the sound of bombardment, the all-piercing terror and violence, the howling of ravaged creatures. You talk about silence. Since that moment, the silence of the people has been the only sound you have been able to hear.



This is a love letter to you, Handalhon cafe

By Even

I never visited you but it feels like I know you. I saw you through journalist Eid Yara's feed and I have not been able to let go of thinking about you ever since. She posted about you on 4th of January 2024. This picture of you was taken a year ago. In the picture she is sitting in your cozy glow, surrounded by her friends. The cool blue light from her laptop is shining on her face, as a contrast to the warm dim candle light atmosphere of the cafe. Behind the people in the photo, there is a painting that they have painted on your walls. It says Palestine in Arabic, along with names of indigenous villages and cities they were displaced from.

From Eid's expression and the expressions of the people sitting beside her, you can see that she feels very safe among these people. She writes that you used to be her second home, where she would spend most of her time. The people who took care of you are her friends, Ragheed and Rana. Ragheed built the cafe under his home and it became a small home for a small family. As Eid writes: "We discussed politics, love, revolutions, planned our futures, drank lots of coffee, ate together and most importantly laughed without any limits. We laughed our hearts out. We also cried at times"

My heart wrenches as I think about how it feels to laugh among people you feel totally safe with. Those moments are what true happiness feels like, in the bottom of your belly. Being surrounded by loved ones, people that you can show yourself with, not having to worry if you are too much or not enough. During the taking of the picture, Eid was conducting a focus group for her dissertation on the resistance of Palestinian journalists. Some of the people in the photo she just met for the first time. When she asked them about living under the occupation and their daily challenges, the electricity went off. That's why they are sitting by candlelight.

Now I'm lighting a candle, in your memory.

A year after the picture was taken you were destroyed in the genocide. You were bombed. I can write this, but I can't fathom this. Like losing a loved one, it feels like your spirit still lingers here. You are not lost, as long as there is someone who remembers you, who keeps calling your name.

I'm thinking about a song from one of my favorite movies, Baghdad Cafe. In the song Jevetta Steele sings "I'm calling you" and you can feel her cry in every corner of your heart. That song is a song I play when I need to cry my heart out. I can depend upon that song. It will always make me cry, when I need it. When I listen to that song, I will think about you, Handalhon cafe.

Your name means:

We will remain here

You will always remain here, in my heart. I will keep crying, calling you.

TO THE PALESTINIAN JOURNALISTS IN GAZA AND IN THE WEST BANK

By Rawany

Dearest Wael el Dahdouh,

I want to start these devotional letter series with you. Forgive me for the tears that are blurring my eyes. I'm looking at a picture of you with your left hand on your hips, wearing your press gear amongst the rubble that currently is your home, the beloved Gaza. A beautiful light silver fur covers the lower half of your face. Your eyes look intently into the camera but I would be a fool to fail to notice the exhaustion in your eyes.

I will never forget how you as a journalist became the subject of the news. How your reporting was disrupted by the tragic news of the bombardment of the house that your family had taken shelter in. In a post I read a bit more about your relationship with your wife and the beautiful romance in your relationship. How you would phone her every day to send her updates and how deeply worried she must have been for your safety. I hope that every inch of your soul clings on to the memories of these beloved ones that you lost...

I don't think myself or the people in the place where I live, will ever understand the incredible strength it takes to endure what you had to endure and still answer to the responsibility of being the voice for your peoples immediately after such a loss. Of course how could you stop, with Israeli terror bombing chasing you and the Gazans with every minute. Perhaps it was the honor of your loved ones that you were trying to keep alive, by picking up your press gear immediately. And perhaps, at that moment the responsibility to be the voice of Gaza, outweighs any personal sufferings. What a giant heart and giant shoulders you must have to bear this responsibility with the gracefulness that you do!

There's another picture of you and your beloved Hamza in an embrace, and him giving you a kiss on your forehead. This seems to be taken a day after Samer got martyred and when you got injured by that attack. When I zoom into the details of this photo, I notice how your right hand is resting on the ribs of Hamza. With your eyes closed, you are sinking into this intimate moment and drinking from the fountain of love that pours from Hamza's kiss into your body. Your son breathing strength and courage back into you, probably with the same firm loving grip as the many times you have held him when he was a little boy. This incredibly soft moment between you and Hamza speaks of the unbreakable kind of love that the Palestinians have for one another. In a political world that demonizes Palestinian men, it is this moment between a father and a son, amidst an ongoing genocide, that speaks so gently yet with a great clarity about the future of Palestine. A Free Palestine where fathers and sons can hold one another in a firm embrace without the deadly threats of the Occupation lurking around the corner.

I want to thank you for all the ways that you have shown and continue to show what it really means, to bear the responsibility of being the voice of a whole people. I will cherish this picture of you and Hamza and come back to it whenever I need courage spoken back into my bones, courage that is vital in this long fight for liberation.

With huge admiration and hope that sooner than later we will meet in a Free Palestine.

Kind spells of protection.

A Love Letter to the Cats of Gaza

By Aino-Kaisa Koistinen

Do not ask a cat, who she belongs to, for the cat belongs to no one
and to the whole of humanity

There is a picture of a fluffy white cat
in the arms of a boy in a wheelchair,
or perhaps it is just a chair

Do they have access to wheelchairs in
Gaza? I think the boy has only one leg,
if I remember correctly,
as I almost do not dare to try

I do not dare not to

I can feel the softness of the cat,
like I feel the softness of the cat that I live with,
like a promise, like a cloud

I can feel the cat's purr, a friendly thunder,
somehow this small wonder, this cat has
already forgiven us

Because a boy in a wheelchair
did not leave behind his thunder, his cloud,
even though we keep leaving

We just keep leaving
them all behind



To the cats of Gaza

By Hanima Nawaz

Dear little ones,

Being a cat parent, I write to you on behalf of my own beloved cats and extend warm whisker greetings to you and your furless companions in Gaza.

As I write this letter to you, I see my youngest one, Jhilmil, run around my home, doing the fastest laps at 3 in the morning, being her happiest. And I wonder how long you have gone without playing chase with your human siblings. I wonder if you chase the shadows of uncertainty with the same fervor that my cats pursue the stuffed toy hung at the end of the stick.

My middle one, Manyari, is feisty, she roars down the roof of our house when she is not served her food on time. She feasts on scraps of abundance, contrary to the whispers of hunger that haunt your streets. How do you endure, little ones, in a land where survival is not a choice but a testament to tenacity?

My oldest one, Genie, is a bit cowardly. The sound of the blender is enough to snatch the soul out of his body. He rushes to my arms till the evil stops echoing around him. And then I am reminded of the parallel worlds we inhabit, where your gentle purrs of contentment are constantly drowned out by the ear splitting bombardments. Where do you seek solace, when there is not a safe corner as far as you can see.

While I shower my own cats with love and affection at the comfort of our home, I cannot help but envy the depth of connection you share with your furless companions, who refuse to leave your side. Companions who stayed true to their promise even when they are stripped of it every passing day. Companions who refuse to not love, not care, not take accountability.

And so, dear cats of Gaza, on behalf of Genie, Manyari and Jhilmil, I pray for the day when you would be able to visit us here, at our home, not having to risk losing yours forever. We shall work towards the day when you frolic in the warmth of your home again as your mischievous self, breaking things, and ripping curtains, being you... as you should be.

With love



Letter to Gaza

By Nat Wastnidge

Today I watched someone throw 2 slices of toast into the bin that were 'too overdone' for them to eat.

I thought of the tiny Palestinian boy that had queued for hours to get beans for his family, only to accidentally drop them into the rubble. He spent the next good while carefully picking each precious bean from the ground and dusting off whatever debris he could so he could take food back to his family.

We take so much for granted and we shouldn't. Now, everything I do each day makes me think of someone in Palestine who is living this humanitarian nightmare. WE have created so many on this earth.

Does it make me feel grateful that I can turn on a tap, eat, shelter? Maybe it used to but now it makes me feel guilty and sad at the injustice and inequality of it all. I feel vulnerable because as we continue to see the human rights of 'those people' 'over there' being eroded at a terrifying rate, I am under no illusion that this could be us one day.

I wonder if i would have the same strength and resolve that 1000's of these people have. I relive scenarios in my mind. I question my decisions on a daily basis. I wonder who would stand with ME and who would turn away. I feel the cold in my home and think about trying to shelter in my 3rd tent that is under fire.

It is incomprehensible, but what I am choosing to be witness to each day is leaving an indelible mark on my heart and soul.

I feel different now. It is easy to open your eyes and 'look' but to open your heart and 'see'., that is what so many more of us need to do.

It has taken this genocide, this one of many that we've watched in our lifetime, to really open me up to do something and I am bittersweet grateful for that.

We need to keep solidarity alive, for all of us, every single day that we get to live'.

Dear Olive Trees of Palestine

By Shabana Hassan

Dear Olive Trees of Palestine,

You have been native to this land longer than any one of us.

You have borne silent witness to...

Incessant drones hovering above

Tiny hands picking speckles of flour off the ground

Family names wiped off the register

Stripped dignity and destroyed dreams

Poisoned lies, disguised hypocrisy and empty promises.

You have lost the People who gave you life and at times, you have lost yourself too. But the winds of change have begun gusting through your leaves.

Eyes and hearts have been opened to the cries and chants.

Evolved is your existence.

Your branches represent beyond palatable peace, now also unshakable resistance.

Akin to you, we will survive the long draughts of scorching oppression and withstand winters of injustice.

We will learn from you, to regenerate and recover.

Both you and I will hold tight to our roots – mine to my humanity and you to the soil of Palestine, from the river to the sea.



Love Letter to Gaza

By Emma Fält

I have seen you carrying each other. Comforting each other. Dancing together. Singing together. In the middle of all horrors.

All we can return to is the embrace of others.

I hear this place was a paradise by the sea. Warm, soft evening, filled with loved ones, waves and laughter. Speaking from your soul with tender eyes on friends.

I hope soon this is all over. You can return to rebuild this paradise.

There's a small flower emerging from the rubbles, one of resistance and togetherness and truth. I hope one that blooms for the world. Truth of how the world is, how our leaders are nothing but darkness.

My wound is burning rage. This fight we'll have for the rest of our lives. Gaza in our hearts grows roots deeper and deeper.

Karo, Finland

Seeds of the Intifada

By Isha Kathuria

Dear Palestine,

Your words are the wind
On which I set my sail
Steer me right
Into the eye of the storm.
Breathe life to the clouds,
Breathe.
The rain bites
Not rain,
Not sea,
Though salt forms crystals on my skin.
It falls to the earth and waters the seeds
That you planted
Billions of sprouts
Rear their heads to the storm
A revolution of green.
The sun turns red,
A triangle emerging from white clouds.
Lightning cracks and the sky goes black.



land of milk & honey

By Natalie Shell

a tree grows in brooklyn
a heart breaks in gaza
even the sunshine feels dull
sisters separated by an ocean
one sky filled with skyscrapers
the other with trails of fire
and yet both are bright blue in the afternoon

let me breathe on the wind so it might find you
cross the vast oceans and mountains
swirl around olive branches, warming their fruit
ruffle your hair, tug at your scarf
and dance through tents lifting kites, shrieks of joy buoying it higher higher higher

let it gently bend down and embrace the dust, welcoming the fallen angels
and carry them onward, upward
a graceful murmuration pulsing in the sky



Before I Throw Away This Orange

For Bisan Odeh

By Hasheemah Afaneh

Dear Bisan,

It took me a few weeks before I started following you on social media. No one was using the word *genocide* yet. A part of me was wishing the bombardment would last only a few days - a few weeks at most - and we would all go back to being strangers. The mind makes odd calculations when it is in shock: *if I don't follow you on social media, then I am sure this will end soon*. I spent the first few weeks in shock at what I was seeing on my phone screen. This shock carried on into all parts of my life, personal and professional. I couldn't remember what was said in most work meetings. I'd forget to eat. I couldn't sleep more than two hours without waking up for another two, and so on.

You kept appearing on my timeline. None of us have any right to ignore you.

I started following you the day you posted a video showing the destruction of your work studio. It was early on, and still, no one was using the word *genocide*, and like myself, you were in colorful summer clothes then. I can't believe we've changed seasons again, and we're supposed to go back to wearing colorful summer clothes. How do we find color in the world after taking the color out of Gaza?

Speaking of seasons, in the winter, I went to buy new boots after I wore out the ones I've had forever. I went to a shoe store, and thought how every winter growing up in Palestine, I'd go shopping for winter clothes and boots with my mother. I started to wonder if that is something you did with your mother. I started to cry, and no one around me had any idea why.

I got used to waking up to your saying, 'Hi, my name is Bisan, and I'm still alive.' Not the kind of 'used to' that normalizes the situation, but the kind where, if I didn't see your profile immediately on my grid when I woke up, I'd start to ask my friends if they heard from you. It's crazy how you don't know us, but we know you.

I can't bare to see you cry, and as the days of the genocide increase, the more times I see you cry. Your features and your English pronunciation remind me of my little sister, so when I hear you cry, I think of my sister in your situation, and I want to burn the world to the ground.

One day, you posted a video of you having found an orange. I can't remember if this was when you were at Al-Shifa Hospital or not, but you found an orange, and you showed us how there was a bit of mold on it. With a smile on your face, you peeled the orange and ate it. Now, when I look at oranges, I think of you. When I see mold, I think *I am no better than you*. I peel the orange and eat it.

In solidarity,
Hasheemah



Poems through the war

Nadine Murtaja

1.

And if death
does not suffocate me
the smoke will
carrying memories, screams
the remains of families
from years ago
smoke that announces
the burial of a new civil record
into a mutilated grave.
I now fear counting.
I fear numbers will turn
in my head
I count stars
only to realize
they are warplanes
delivering souls,
to their final abode.
When my mother
saw a bright white light,
she told me
tenderly
what a dazzling star it was.
Until the light departed,
stealing more voices
from the streets.

2.

Still my little doll, though between us lie
Thousands of kilometers, airplanes, and a sea
Where the boat of death dwells upon a shore
Unacquainted with the first kiss between lovers, One
displaced, the other hoping for a new encounter.

You remain my first childhood doll,
And the words of first love,
Though between us now lie ashes,
Remnants of bodies, stones of homes living out their sadness.



You are still my sole witness,
The distant mirage of my existence as a human.
Forgive me, I thought the house would remain
An anchor of safety, where the scent of books and pictures
Would ease your solitude.

My mind hadn't matured then,
Counting days of war and seconds of
death, Realizing the house was fear,
And the key to safety, a lie.

Forgive and excuse me,
For you have not crossed the bridge of bodies and
blood, Nor played the game of movement and idol,
When a *quadcopter* drone hovers above you.

You have not sifted through the grains of sand
That shared your tent.

You remain sweet, your nails cotton-white,
Unburdened by remnants of burning or shelling.

My dear doll, you always sang to me,
To calm my fears.

May I have a song that weaves a tale
Without the thread of death or tears.



Letter to the disabled and sick people of Gaza

By Ar Utke Ács

Dear disabled and sick people of Gaza,

I think of you daily and I have been for the past, soon, half a year. The world was not made for us, the crips, the chronically ill, the mad, the immunocompromised, and now you are in circumstances that abled bodied people cannot even survive. A mass-disabling in fact. A ongoing genocide. I can't believe my own eyes. My heart is breaking every day. My jaw clenches in rage from the injustice. I have watched videos of deaf people who don't hear the airstrikes. Pictures of people who have no chance of climbing through the rubble. Fridges for medicine that are banned from entering by the zionist occupation forces. I can only think of the people on the other side that are operated without anesthesia and people who don't receive the medication their lives depend on. The Al Shifa hospital is currently besieged and as an immunosuppressed person, I know how dire a hospitalisation can be as a patient under normal circumstances. During war, under these circumstances, it is unfathomable. As disabled people we are often the first to go under any circumstance – people are taught to question the value of our existence. But I get to witness your strength and the true beauty of your people. We see you. We hear you. And we won't stop witnessing – even from afar.

You are teaching us sumud and we are doing our best to learn from you. To show up in solidarity in a whole array of ways. We have been demonstrating every week since October – most often several times a week. Whatever city I go to, I will find the local demonstration network. We are queers, we are disabled people, medical workers, students, jews, young and old. We have organized sit-ins in public spaces and have been thrown out by the police. We have gathered donations and sent e-sims. We have started study circles to learn more deeply about your culture, your land and your people. About the zionist forces threatening all of this beauty. We have been marching through the dark nights of the Nordic hemisphere with torches. My friends set up tables across from the Swedish parliament in the middle of a snow storm under the title "For Gaza's Children" for people to write down all the names of children martyred. I wrote the name of Saleh Kamal Mansour Sobh and grieved the fact that this faulty world had lost yet another young human life with all its dreams, imagination and future ahead. My colleagues and I have been writing our local institutions to push them to show their solidarity and humanity. And in some cases it has made a difference: it has led to statements

and also a public reading of the Gaza Monologues back in November. The monologues made a deep impact on all of us. It takes you, the Palestinian people out of the absurd news cycles and give us the chance to peek into what your realities and dreams look like and how the violence affects you, but hasn't stopped your children's visions for their future. At least not until now. We are speaking up against zionists and people defending zionism an apologists of this genocide or occupation. We are educating people that are misinformed and undereducated. We are praying for you and lighting candles at night in your honour. I am supporting a colleague of Syrian descent to host an azza for Gaza, to create a space to hold grief and transform hopelessness into solidarity. There hasn't been a day where I haven't thought of you and the people of Gaza. The methods and approaches are many and varied, but they all have to come together for this to matter in the long haul. The voices of solidarity of the world are loud and clear. We will never be able to do enough for you, but we will be able to persevere. I would like you to know that we see you and we will keep on raising our voices and take action to the best of our abilities and beyond. You have shown us that you are a free people and that it is the rest of the world living in shackles, not able to keep up to speed with your grace.

A friend of mine of Gazan descent, now living in Norway, had his first child in the beginning of October before the current attacks began. The baby is called Samar and is a ray of light amidst this catastrophe. As she grows and her beauty is revealed so is the horror of the world she was born into. But we are nothing without our hope and the steadfastness you teach us every day. And when the day comes, I will do my best in supporting the rebuilding of your beautiful country.

With love and care,

x Ar

The Colors of the Rainbow

By Althea Valencia

Once upon a time,
a vibrant story unfolds,
Where hope, from a rainbow,
its journey boldly holds.

Red, meaning life,
vibrant with life's pulse,
A feeling of passion,
an energy that won't convulse.

Orange, for healing,
like a loving, warm embrace,
May you feel this type of warm,
Let it bring you comfort and grace.

Yellow, resembles the sun,
casting down a golden hue,
Illuminating the dark,
Like a radiant breakthrough.

Green, reminds us of nature,
where life intertwines,
A sanctuary,
where hope and existence align.

Blue, meaning art,
as it continues to paint the skies,
A masterpiece of courage,
where hope never dies.

Indigo, the harmony
in life's melody,
The symphony of peace,
soothing the soul tenderly.

Violet, meaning spirit,
soaring above all other color,
The peace, love, and spirit we see
in your people
is unlike any other.

So, in life's vast canvas, let the
rainbow guide,
Each color is a chapter, where hope
will reside.
Proclaim it now, let everyone know,
After a storm will always come a rainbow.



Their light will never die.

By R

