

FREEDOM Day TOMORROW Is WOMEN'S Day Today

Poems for the New Year



Celebrating Women and Resistance
Around the World and
Inside the United States

Knowing that there are
Women
at home
in prison
underground
in battle

For ourselves
For our sisters
For our children
For the Future

Freedom Day Tomorrow
Is Women's Day Today

Women Against Imperialism
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Women's Day Song

Celebrate our women in campaigns
Celebrate our women in the jails
Celebrate our women over many fighting years
Celebrate our women for their triumphs, and for their tears

There is no day
from which women are exempt,
no day in which women
do not play their part;
every day in fact
is women's day,
freedom day tomorrow
is women's day today

Remember all our women in campaigns
Remember all our women in the jails
Remember all our women over many fighting years
Remember all our women for their triumphs, and for their tears

There is no struggle
From which women are exempt,
no struggle in which women
do not play their part;
our struggle is in fact
for women's day,
to struggle for tomorrow
is a woman's fight today

Celebrate our women in campaigns
Celebrate our women in the jails
Celebrate our women over many fighting years
Celebrate our women for their triumphs, and for their tears

There is no freedom
while women are not free,
no freedom when women
do not have their say;
freedom day in fact
is women's day,
freedom day tomorrow
is women free today

Remember all our women in campaigns
Remember all our women in the jails
Remember all our women over many fighting years
Remember all our women for their triumphs, and for their tears

Fight for an Africa
where women are not slaves,
Fight for an Africa where women
do not waste their lives;
South Africa in fact
is on its way,
to celebrate its freedom
and to honour women's day.

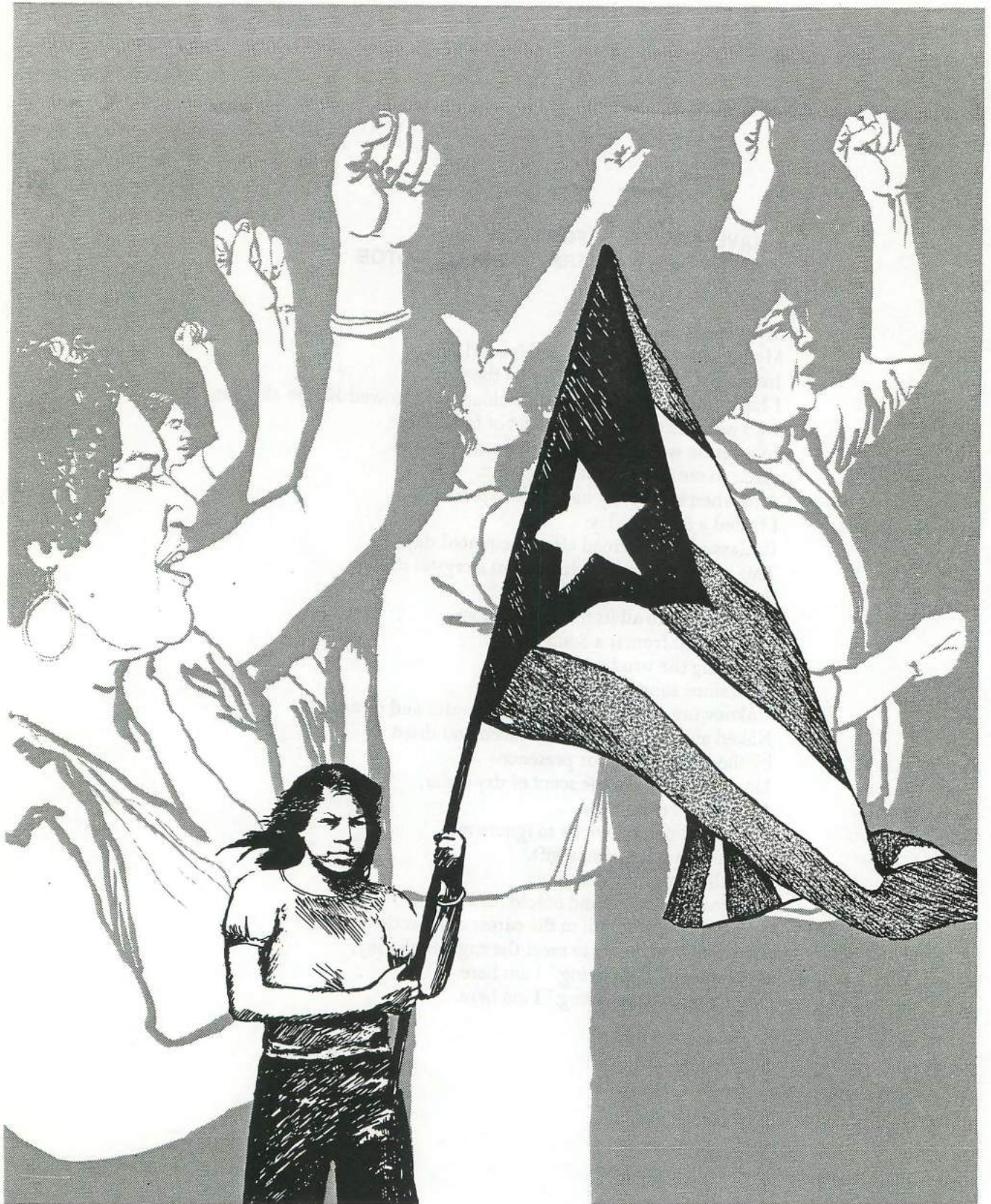


Scarlet Whitman
Azania



I HAVE BOWED BEFORE THE SUN
ANNA LEE WALTERS PAWNEE-OTOE

My name is "I am living."
My home is all directions and is everlasting.
Instructed and carried to you by the wind,
I have felt the feathers in pale clouds and bowed before the Sun
who watches me from a blanket of faded blue.
In a gentle whirlwind I was shaken,
made to see on earth in many ways.
And when in awe my mouth fell open,
I tasted a fine red clay.
Its flavor has remained after uncounted days.
This gave me cause to drink from a crystal stream
that only I have seen.
So I listened to all its flowing wisdom
and learned from it a Song—
This song the wind and I
have since sung together.
Unknowing, I was encircled by its water and cleansed.
Naked and damp, I was embraced and dried
by the warmth of your presence.
Dressed forever in the scent of dry cedar,
I am purified and free.
And I will not allow you to ignore me.
I have brought to you a gift.
It is all I have but it is yours.
You may reach out and enfold it.
It is only the strength in the caress of a gentle breeze,
But it will carry you to meet the eagle in the sky.
My name is "I am living." I am here.
My name is "I am living." I am here.



INTERNAL RIVERS

Some time ago, I learned to cry without tears
as thousands do, who suffer;
they fall on the inside, the tears.
Inexhaustible torrents.
They don't fill barrels, but bandoliers.
Many bandoliers, filled with tears,
tears as hard as bullets.
Cartridge belts that suffering fills
with bullets that are teardrops.
Every bullet with the name of someone who caused suffering.
Thousands of bullets!-and if one misses its target,
there are thousands that will reach it.
Many are the centuries of suffering.
In the time of the long-suffering,
every century is an enormous teardrop.
There are cartridge belts with the cries of the children
In Vietnam alone they could have filled them
all with the tears of all the children.
There are bandoliers with women's tears.
A girl, a torch in Vietnam
A mother, with her fertile belly ripped up.
Thousands of cartridges -
through the centuries they have been filling up.
Thousands of virile teardrops
to fill rifles by the thousands;
Thousands, because those that don't reach their target
suffice to overflow, to from a weeping sea
burning with molten lead, to smother and drown
the tyrants.
When one may have
a rifle without shooting it, and teardrops
have ceased to be gunshots,
and the land will have been cleansed of suffering;
the living will welcome the dead anew,
and there will flower anew, in the resurgence,
the human purpose deflected through the crying times.

Dona Consuelo Lee de Corretjer/ 1975
Puerto Rico

A History of Lesbianism

How they came into the world,
the women-loving-women
came in three by three
and four by four
the women-loving-women
came in ten by ten
and ten by ten again
until there were more
than you could count

they took care of each other
the best they knew how
and of each other's children,
if they had any.

How they lived in the world,
the women-loving-women
learned as much as they were allowed
and walked and wore their clothes
the way they liked
whenever they could. They did whatever
they knew to be happy or free
and worked and worked and worked.
The women-loving-women
in America were called dykes
and some liked it
and some did not.

they made love to each other
the best they knew how
and for the best reasons

How they went out of the world,
the women-loving-women
went out one by one
having withstood greater and lesser
trials, and much hatred
from other people, they went out
one by one, each having tried
in her own way to overthrow
the rule of men over women,
they tried it one by one
and hundred by hundred,
until each came in her own way
to the end of her life
and died.

The subject of lesbianism
is very ordinary; it's the question
of male domination that makes everybody
angry.

I Argue My Case

--Susan Saxe
(served 10 years as a political prisoner)

Gentlemen of the Jury:
I have had the time and opportunity to appear
before you in the guise
(disguise) of every woman:
to you, sir, I was the dumb hand
that wiped your
table,
to you, sir, a flimsy black
skirt on legs,
to you, some hard
down-on-me woman who might
(or might not) yet
be downed again.
To him, an ass,
to him, a breast, a leg
to him.
To that one, just another working bitch.
To each, another history, to each
another (partial) lie.
We women are liars, you say.
(It is written.)
But you have made us so.
We are too much caught up in cycles, you say.
But your gods cannot prevent that.
So we act out our cycles,
one or many,
in the rhythm of what has to be
(because we say so)
our common destiny.
And so, before you are taken in by one of our
perfect circles,
remember also that we are in perfect
motion.
And when you, (and you will,)
run counter to the flow of revolution,
the wheel of women will continue to turn,
and grind you
so fine.





THE ONE WHO DIED FIGHTING

Don't ask me who I am
Nor if you ever met me.
The dreams that I have had
Will grow even though I am not here,
I no longer live, but I was
In what you were dreaming
And the others who keep on
fighting
Will make new roses grow,
And in the name of those things
Every one will call my name.

Don't remember my face.
That was my war mask
As long as there was a need to hate
in my land.
In the sky which is becoming light
You will know what my real face is like.
Few people ever heard me laugh
But they will find my unknown laughter
in the dawn
Of the day which is about to begin.

Don't ask me my age.
I am as old as everyone.
I chose among many ways
To be older than my age,
And my true years
Are the shots that I have fired.
I am born in every volley
And even though my body dies
I will be exactly as old
As the child I have liberated.

Don't go looking for my tomb
Because you won't find it.
My hands are in the hands of others who are shooting,
My voice the one that is shouting,
My body the one that remains whole.
And know that I will only die
If the rest of you weaken,
Because the one who died fighting
Lives in every companera.

Anonymous, El Salvador



The state of Chihuahua has a long history of revolutionary activity. Pictured are women who fought with Pancho Villa's army in 1910.



To My Aunt Adelina

I watch you glide shadow-like
gentle presence inhabiting
our old home.
Beginning the day with your bath
in the chilly dawn,
the bells of Yalaguina
reverberating in our dreams.
The same ritual, still solemn
though no one awaits you now,
only your sister's letters
or the daily paper to be read on the sofa
immersing you artfully
in a world you barely touch.

It's strange, we've joined our solitudes
and I still remember you falling asleep
chin on your chest and hands in your lap
before finishing our bedtime story.
Now when our talk goes on and on
always revolving about a single theme,
because day after day you wonder
at the size and ages of my children
and you tell me, as if it just happened,
the story of your brother's death.

Let's sit and share this silence
or I'll explain the Sandinista Revolution,
the rectification of your teacher's pension
or our first year of victory,
why we women stand guard,
the militia uniform
and so many other new things you'll try to understand
before you have to leave them.

Vidaluz Meneses/Nicaragua

WHAT IS LEFT?

After the bars and the gates and the
degradation

What is left?

After the lock ins and the lock outs and the lock
ups

What is left?

I mean, after the chains that get entangled in the
gray of one's matter

After the bars that get stuck in the hearts of
men and women

What is left?

After the tears and disappointments

After the lonely isolation

After the cut wrist and the heavy noose

What is left?

I mean, like, after the commissary kisses

And the get-your-shit-off blues

After the hustler has been hustled

What is left?

After the sad futile maneuvers

After the murderburgers and the goon squads
and the tear gas

After the bulls and the bullpens and the bullshit

What is left?

I mean, like, after you know that God can't be
trusted

After you know that the shrink is a pusher

That the word is a whip, and the badge is a
bullet

What is left?

After you know that the dead are still walking

After you realize that silence is talking

That outside and inside are just an illusion

What is left?

I mean, like, where is the sun?

Where are her arms and where are her kisses?

There are lip prints on my pillow

I am searching

What is left?

I mean, like, nothing is standstill and nothing
is abstract

The wing of a butterfly can't take flight

The foot on my back is a part of a body

The song that I sing is a part of an echo

What is left?

I mean, like, love is specific

Is my mind a machine gun?

Is my heart a hacksaw?

Can I make freedom real? Yeah,

What is left?

I am at the top and the bottom of a lower-archy

I am in love with losers and laughter

I am in love with freedom and children

Love is my sword and truth is my compass

What is left?



Assata Shakur, a member of the Black Liberation Army was captured and imprisoned in 1973. Imprisoned for life she was liberated in 1980 and is living in freedom.

I can take being locked in a cage each night
and twice during each day
the guards and rules and petty harassments
But I can not
will not/not EVER
take my heart
let it be whittled down to fit into this prison
I will not shrink my sights to the boundaries
of these walls
or bend my energies to the daily routine.
I will not make my mind meander into meaningless mindfucks
or let love become a soap opera
or friendship a commodity
Nor will I ever
not EVER stop caring/hoping/believing in
IT all
us all
all those everywhere who struggle and believe
who have visions and dreams
 who are willing to die
 and willing to live
 and willing to Fight for IT
because everything is possible not to speak of imperative.
I will not mend my ways or ever
not EVER stop striving for freedom
for our future
and in each day.

--11/17/84

Judy Clark

Judy Clark is a North American Anti Imperialist Resistance Fighter.
She is serving a life sentence for having participated in the October 20, 1981
Brink's expropriation in Nyack New York. She is currently locked down
in segregation for two years at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility.



I LIKE TO THINK OF HARRIET TUBMAN



I like to think of Harriet Tubman.
Harriet Tubman

who carried a revolver,
who had a scar on her head
from a rock thrown
by a slave-master (because she
talked back), and who
had a ransom on her head
of thousands of dollars and who
was never caught, and who
had no use for the law
when the law was wrong,
who defied the law. I like
to think of her.

I like to think of her especially
when I think of the problem of
feeding children.

The legal answer
to the problem of feeding
children
is ten free lunches every month,
being equal, in the child's real
life,
to eating lunch every other day.
Monday but not Tuesday.
I like to think of the President
eating lunch Monday, but not
Tuesday.
And when I think of the
President

and the law, and the problem of
feeding children, I like to
think of Harriet Tubman
and her revolver.

And then sometimes
I think of the President
and other men,
men who practise the law,
who revere the law,
who make the law,
who enforce the law
who live behind
and operate through
and feed themselves
at the expense of
starving children
because of the law,
men who sit in paneled offices
and think about vacations
and tell women
whose care it is
to feed children
not to be hysterical
not to be hysterical as in the word
hysterikos, the greek for
womb suffering,
not to suffer in their
wombs,
not to care,
not to bother the men
because they want to think
of other things
and do not want

to take the women seriously.
I want them
to take women seriously.
I want them to think
about Harriet Tubman,
and remember,
remember she was beat
by a white man
and she lived
and she lived
to redress her grievances,
and she lived in swamps
and wore the clothes of a man
bringing hundreds of fugitives
from
slavery, and was never caught,
and led an army,
and won a battle,
and defied the laws
because the laws were
wrong, I want men
to take us seriously.
I am tired, wanting them to think
about right and wrong.
I want them to fear.
I want them to feel fear now
as I have felt suffering
in the womb, and
I want them
to know
that there is always a time
there is always a time to make
right,
what is wrong,
there is always a time
for retribution
and that time
is beginning.

—Susan Griffin



Sabha is an old woman.
Sixty years old . . .
Her heart is green, green, green.
Like an old tree —
as old as the earth.

Her son . . .
. . . will soon be nine.
But he knows how to throw stones!
And he knows how to shout:
Oh, Palestine!

His mother shouted as they knocked him down:
Leave my son alone!
Leave my son alone!
Isn't it enough that you've killed his father and brother?

But the devil only smiled,
and told her:
Listen, old woman!
We'll slaughter all who don't obey.

But then the mother produced a knife,
and before he raised his hand
she sank it deep into his heart.

Abu Sadek Hussein

(One of the most beloved poets
among the exiled Palestinians, the
author of the most popular
fighting songs of the liberation
movement.)



Winter Monsoon

I lie there listening to the winter monsoon
Wail

In the night

And I think of you.

Little daughter dear,

Have you gone to sleep,

Or lie you there awake?

Who is looking after you my child?

Who picks up your blanket,

When you drop it in your sleep,

Your plump forearms exposed to the cold?

How I crave to hug you,

And kiss your lips,

And put my cheek against yours,

And caress your shoulders,

On my little daughter.

Without you how the bed looks forlorn!

Can there be in this world

More grieved mothers?

In your letter you said,

"I dreamt of you, mother"

No my child, it won't help to dream,

Let us be back together,

By destroying the enemy.



Babies can
be raised by you
and friends
and life
and the happiness you feel
because
you are not a coward.

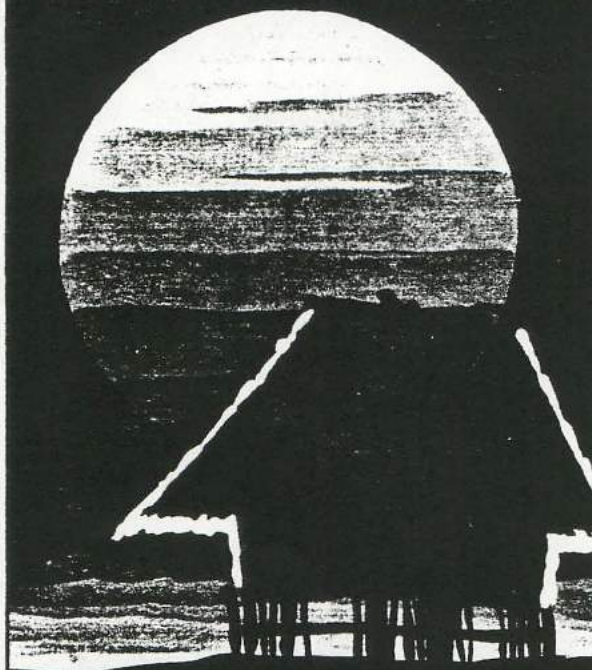
Babies can
be loved by you
and people varied in
colors
sizes
speech
and thoughts.

Babies can
grow confident
by examples of samples
in you
and confident others
you attract.

Babies can
survive
with you
and all the other hundreds and thousands
and millions
of things and places
and people
and other evidences of life
you could accept for yourself
and baby.

--Willesse Comissiong

the day
we stop
burning
with love
people
will die
of the cold



FOR NELIA

Why are you so hard? they ask.
Why do you not bend a little?

They call it grace
Swaying like the bamboo

With the mind.
Listen to it weave

The music of compromise
While it kisses the ground

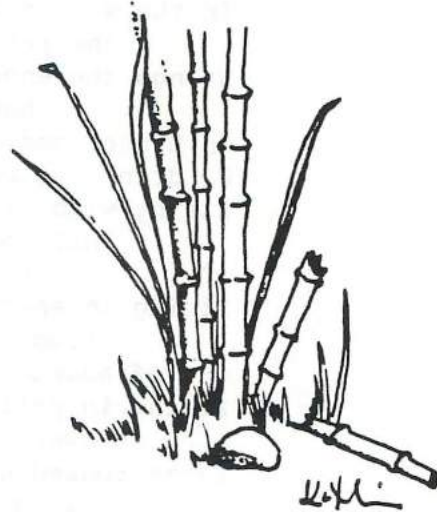
At your feet.
Even the bamboos however

Could only bend so much.
When the storm comes

Listen to their cracking!
They break one by one.

You could only bend so much.
I would prefer to be a rock

Smoothed by the years
But unswaying.



Why are you so hard? they ask
Why do you not bend a liittle?

Mila D. Aguilar/Philippines

Mila D. Aguilar was arrested on August 6, 1984 and charged with "subversion and conspiracy to commit rebellion". She is in solitary confinement somewhere in Manila.

RAISE THE FRUIT

In the winter solstice
the returning sun
Brings the enormous and perpetual
harvest.
In hunger and darkness
We drink the communal light,
Rising with all creatures
into the perpetual
rising sun.
Rising in ancestral dust
from furrow of dung and blood.
Out of absence
Rising in pollen
we await each other.
Earth roused will bring us home
in seed and pollen.
Dance the ceremonial together
in the entire solar light.
Sun shinging on all friends.
O meet me in the unbombed villages
of the earth.
In cobs of corn
In the dust flesh
In the resurrected wheat
Forgive the root
and raise the fruit!

Meridel LeSueur



Seed Corn Must Not Be Ground