ForeWord Reviews

A Chorus for Peace
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Peace is one of humanity's highest and most elusive goals.

Several years ago, the United Nations proclaimed 2001-2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World. In their introduction this anthology, the editors state that one of their goals is "to contribute in some modest way to what we dare to foresee as a swelling chorus, an anthem of blessed peace."

Divided into eight sections - Children in War, Women Surviving War, The Bitter Waste, Mothers in Ambiguity, Domestic Battlefields, Reaching and Rebuilding, Nature Speaks, and Peace to the Spirit - this collection is thought-provoking and heart-wrenching. The poems offer glimpses of the best and worst traits of the human spirit. The poets articulate their hope for a peaceful society and the belief that peace starts with the individual. Laura Fargas writes unequivocally: "If there is a God, he has a lot to answer for. Not only the obvious evils, but also these other things / we should not mistake for easy." In "Anniversary", Joy Harjo reminds the reader of the need to "Move over and let us sleep until the dust settles, / until we figure this thing out."

Arnold, emeritus professor of English at Brigham Young University, is the author of numerous books on twentieth-century American writers. Ballif-Spanvill is professor of psychology and director of the Women's Research Institute, also at BYU; her studies on violence and peace in men and women have received wide publication in psychology journals. Tracy, whose work has been published in various literary journals, teaches creative writing at Western Michigan University.

The editors have done an excellent job of bringing together a cross-section of poets with national and international reputations. The anthology includes poems by the American poets Toi Derricotte, Lucille Clifton, Naomi Shihab Nye, Linga Gregg, Marjorie Agosin, Molly Peacock, Maxine Kumin, Louise Gluck, Pattiann Rogers, Brigit Pegeen Kelly, Rita Dove, and Joy Harjo. Some of the internationally recognized poets are Bing XIn, Motoko Michiura, Fawziyya Abu Khalid, Gabriel Mistral, Claribel Alegria, and Ingeborg Bachman. The list of contributors is

impressive by any standard.

The editors realize that “one small volume of poems is not going to change the world” But one small volume of poems might change a few hearts. Their efforts should be applauded and their anthology should be adopted by reading groups and for university courses in Women’s and Peace Studies.

Pam Kingsbury