



C.A.U.S.E.
Coalition of Artists United for Social Engagement



© Eva Lewarme - Poland/Canada
"Only Dolls Don't Bleed"

"SINFONIA DE AMOR" 2006 CAMPAIGN

In 2005 **C.A.U.S.E.** was invited to compose an art- and poetry exhibition in support of a Ecuadorian campaign aiming to create awareness about Ninos Trabajadores (child labour), and moreover to inspire their parents to avoid such kind of child abuse i.e. domestic violence that often comes with or eventually is part of children's lives in such situations.

The organising organisation was the PMT, Programa Del Muchacho Trabajador del Banco Central del Ecuador, and the resulting exhibition (art and poetry), in 2006, to travel to Quito (inauguration), Ibarra, Esmeraldas and Riobamba, all cities situated in Ecuador. As an introduction to the Ecuadorian embassy in Belgium a preview exhibit took place in Antwerp Belgium.

In August 2005 we send out an international call to (also) poets to participate at this very important campaign.

In March 2006 we effectually handed over the exhibition, titled "**Sinfonía de Amor**" to the PMT in Quito, Ecuador.

To all participants: **THANK YOU** for making this campaign possible!!

Our international call for poets to participate at this very important campaign resulted in contributions from 19 poets from 11 different nations and 26 poems.

HIJA DE LA TIERRA TARAHUMARA
© ADA MEDINA-MÉXICO

Hija de la tierra tarahumara,
piel cobriza,
no levantas mas allá de los 1.10,
con mejilla partidas,
el viento en contra,
ojos de hambre.

En línea recorres las ventanillas de los autos
pidiendo korima,
las tripas se revuelcan vacías,
horas y horas... y ningún alimento ha confortado el día de hoy tu estomago
aun así, como niña que eres,
mientras el semáforo cede el paso a los vehículos,
juegas con piedras hasta el siguiente alto.

Quién tendrá la misericordia de aventarte unas monedas,
¡quién tendrá la misericordia de darte una sonrisa!

Heart mirages
By Allyn Garavaglia © - USA

Silence seduces the conscience
through the cracked door

Beneath the skin,
shutters drawn-
The disquiet of still anthems
of feudal castles and lords
swim, like dust ...

Heart and bones
lay gathered in a small
glass book, the mirror
hung and clung to nails
that pierce
the hide of a creature
called home

Extinct to the small pair
of eyes trying to recognize
itself- At the end of day

Twilight-
Purple and black, swelling
and spreading
Swallowing the golden day
from the earth and sky

Summerday memories

plucked like petals from wild daisies-
"Tonight I am good ...
Tonight I am alive" ...

Coiled into those bitter-sweet magical chains
Spells of love, survival and fear
And what other devotions will hold fast through the
night

To disappear into God's country ...

Beneath the skin,
shutters drawn-
The quiet and still anthems
of feudal castles and lords
still a'rest, like mortal dust ...

Heart and bones
lay gathered in small
glass books, the mirror
hung and clung to nails
that pierce
the hide of a creature
called home

Extinct to the small pair
of eyes trying to recognize
itself- At the end of day

Rainbows In Limbo
By Allyn Garavaglia © - USA

A withering disease smolders
underground, the common cloth of day
and the heart its own daily bread

Searching through gray skies,
the thought of rain brings
rainbows to the child's mind

Hope, the promises
of a golden tomorrow world
where the earth won't be so hard

And brittle deep, cracking
beneath a pair of over-sized boots
walking over memories
that were never his own

To keep the promises
of a golden tomorrow world
where the earth won't be so hard

Searching through gray heavens,
the drop of rain brings
the thought of rainbows

To a withering disease smoldering
underground, within the common cloth of day
and the heart its own daily bread.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

© Anjana Basu - India

At 8 the streets are all you know,
the tinshack kiss of a hollow pipe
and that dark room which you call shelter,
five hundred or so, if you could count, huddled together,
under auntie's whip,
fingers darting needles in and out of silk.

It isn't much but there's no rain
and the floor is clean
black marks on fabric mean no coins to carry home.
Ma waits with six sisters and an empty pot,
the youngest a baby rolling on a cardboard cradle.

The pot is hungry it waits for food.
You look at me with serious eyes pot black
that think what more is there to this?
You are an adult now, the earner of bread,
and all those soft swaddled things in cars and prams life's toys.

CHILD IS NOT

Child is not a chair
not foot
not body motion
not moving bricks in constant motion

Child is not a toy
not a game
but the last summer day
with stirring grass
the breath on a windless day

Child is not a top
to spin at will
not an eye or arm
not fingers moving back and forth
endlessly in dark and dust
or an upward stretch
to a loaded shelf to and fro and to

Child is not a whip
or a spinning wheel

Child is not a butterfly
Though both have wings
And life in rainbow dust

Child is not

I SEE THEIR FACES IN YOUR EYES

Children grow green in the sun
like trees grow, and dreams
blue space breathes them in
and music in a sky filled dance
rain rocks them, flowers bloom
and shadows trace their leaf night place.
I see their faces in your eyes.

Batuk and his flying carpet © Annette Marie Hyder - Austria

There is a boy and there is a carpet.
Batuk rubs his forehead,
an empty lamp from which the glow has fled
no genie of mischief,
such as a nine year old should have
resides within.

The carpet that he rides each day, his back curled
over it like a tent top, like a pavilion, or oddly
like a lover spooning
is not magic
cannot whisk him away to tower top princess
or simian friend.

He rides that carpet in being attached to it
not allowed to leave its side, even at night,
he must sleep beside it
and open sesame is not a secret password,
the answer to a puzzle,
a game or a conundrum; games mean nothing to him.
Open is the posture of exhausted palms and an empty mouth.
Sesame is the color of scars left from cuts
that had match heads shaved into them,
their sulfur set on fire
so that blood from pricks and nicks could not drop
like scarlet rain atop the carpet plain.

There is a boy and there is a carpet
blooming like a live thing and coming to life
over and over again
beneath his clever hands, quick hands that swing like heroes
through the jungle of the plush carpet burgeoning on the rack --
the threads like vines -- and Batuk's eyes are scouts
in the milling strands
that snake the countless threaded paths that
he must cross each day.

There is a boy and there is a carpet
that steals his breath -- a little more each day.
The wool particles from the carpet nurse at his lungs
-- a myriad hungry kittens that lap
his oxygen until finally, the carpet flies, as if by magic off the rack, his work

accomplished
only to start again
-- always looming
--child carpet weaver labor in India.

SHUTTLE, STEEL AND SEWING THREAD
© Brian d'Arcy - UK-Eire

Shuttle, steel and sewing thread
from the cradle till you're dead,

This is how great wealth is made
from those who labour, under-paid,
for masters of the global trade.

Shuttle, steel and sewing thread
from the cradle till you're dead,

For eons now it has been so,
for eons while the profits grow -
but that is all there is to show.

Shuttle, steel and sewing thread
from the cradle till you're dead,

The system doesn't carry slack,
its bottom line is always black,
so sell your soul and break your back.

Shuttle, steel and sewing thread
from the cradle till you're dead,

Shuttle, steel and sewing thread
from the cradle till you're dead,

Shuttle, steel and sewing thread
from the cradle till you're dead.

Para Adriana
by César Mendoza Morales - © Mexico

Cuéntale de un ogro que no come princesas,
cuéntale de fantasmas que traspasan paredes
y que la cuidan mientras ella duerme.
Dibujale un mundo verde,
cuéntale de un sol que come
mientras la luna duerme
en sus sabanas de noche;
cuéntale, mientras ella es maestra,
que los Ángeles aún tienen alas
y los cazadores no matan lobos,
ni los lobos comen
mientras ella sueña...

Aviones de Papel
by César Mendoza Morales - © Mexico

Porque me quiero inventar un mañana
en el que no haya infamia ni silencio,
porque las alas de éste avión son blandas
como blandas son las esperanzas
que lo protegen durante el vuelo.

He zarpado para descubrirme paso a paso,
porque el sexo profanado exige llanto,
porque los poemas me saben a tabaco
y las palabras se arrastran
buscando y buscando,
porque el aire se agota,
gota a gota,
porque el pasado me trae de vuelta
los sueños destrozados,
porque cruje en silencio
éste corazón enamorado,
porque tus manos son dos letras
que maduran en mi poema,
porque aprendí a volar
en la contaminación de tus prejuicios
y la rebeldía que me acuna,
porque sé de tu vanidad y tu soberbia,
y también sé de tu viaje exhausto
que golpea con fiereza mi retrato.

Esta tarde llueve a cantaros,
las alas de mi cuerpo se han mojado,
el clima anuncia censura a las ideas,
el sol pregona desamparo,
el desastre comienza,
las tormentas, las plagas,
todo anuncia que no hay mañana,
y sin embargo, sobrevivo.

Children labor
© Claude Chuzel - France

and the words which slept rise

time precipitates
an image is plunging in an image
something there has just come very close to your life
bits of history
something opens in the air
under the sword of the day
I am dreaming at the bottom of a dream
to a world that shifts to a different place
the step measures your glance
at the mathematical point of no return

an old legend rises
I changed scale

I pushed back the scale

one does not tell me stories
it is so difficult to strip a sleeping child
perplexed shadows
come to see my kids
my words
the thing resuscitates on the other side

my sister, you do not see anything coming

children dreaming

Untitled

By Craig MacFarlane © - Canada

May peace fall upon your doorstep
And love fill the emptiness of your waiting arms
May happiness be extended to one and all
And may everyone be free to celebrate in beautiful dreams

These sound like sugar coated words
From a hopeless dreamer
A hand me down hippy
Living on burrowed wisdom

There are so many pieces of ourselves
That were never designed to last
When all is stripped away
All that are left are heartbeats and dreams

Is there one vision we can all live in together
That everyone can participate in
Where all children play
And fill the world with joyful ideas?

Maybe these thoughts are not real enough
For a world of asphalt and smoke stacks
Exhaust fumes and microwave radiation meals
We can't have become this cold, this young

Are these proper terms
To express this hurt
Or is this too imprisoning a language
To correctly convey these heavy times

We must unshackle one another
From this suffering we're tethered to
And begin to heal our wounds
In order for the world to spin

-In a less abrupt and volatile motion

WORK FOR CHANGE

By Dr Debjani Chatterjee © - India-UK

He squats by the roadside in the sun,
breaking bricks and stones.
Dust clouds and sharp chips imprison him,
scarring face and lungs.
Grey pallor and sunken eyes can't hide
the stunted child inside.

She perches on a rubbish mountain,
picking cans and rags.
The stinking dump oozes rottenness
rising to heaven.
Garbage, plastics, dirt and grime can't hide
the stunted child inside.

Let us work for change;
we must break this cycle of abuse.
Children are our hope
and the only future we must choose.

© Durlabh Singh - Kenya-UK

Perhaps
The realms of invisible
Will be rendered visible
The realms of untouched
Rendered into tactility
Where the heart will
Wing itself
Into the freshness
Of some infinite facility.

Ready for brokerage of bondage
Into disbarred domains of death
Glazed some visionary perceptions
For the sired eyes to comprehend
Where the hand held in pain
Across the rusty gates of the hell.

Rolling and unrolling
The worlds kept in stealth
Where the wind crosses
Voices of silence still held.

CHIEF SEATTLE – ADDRESS.

You asked me to
Sell my land
How could I sell my land
It would be like
Selling my mind
Selling the skies above
Presences in the airs
Sparkle of the waters
Memories in dark woods
Green meadows and
Sounds of humming bees.

Where sentry trees guarding the mists
Ghostly reflections of the sandy shores
The sap that runs through pine needles
The blood that courses through my veins
The heats generated by the shaggy pony
And my brothers bear ,deer and the eagle soar.

The rivers are my brothers
They quench my thirst, they feed me
Show me kindness, live my life
Feel me heal me bathe me knead me.

The earth is my mother
She nourishes me flourishes me
Perfumes me with flowers
Feeds me with corn
Sings me lullabies
Feels me in her pain
Renews me clues me with mystery.

Do not force me to sell the spirits
My mother earth my brother river
My sister wind the sap in my brain
Gods of my visions heaven Striven
All my shores and the forest frames.

BLISS

By Evelyn Cortez-Davis © - USA

Rushing to work, sipping my Starbucks, how oblivious my world is
to the hands that picked each perfect bean.
And it's bliss.

My plain cotton blouse
from that upscale Westside store
has a thread in common
with a rug woven half a world away -
And the common thread is hidden
in the sweat shops of El Salvador,
of Pakistan, and Bangladesh,

Hidden behind trade agreements
that allege to protect.
Those fancy gourmet markets
where the freshest produce is kept
where sweet strawberries
become smoothies
and the highest prices are set
They find their common thread
in the migrant fields of Kansas,
in the sun-scorched fields of Chile
and Ecuadorean plantations
robbed of color and scent,
where there is no childhood left.
In my new sports shoes
endorsed by TV stars,
every stitch bears witness
to the sweat and the scars
of a heart grown up too soon,
and the cruelty of the bottom line.

A sweet young cipota
Whom I will never meet
Finds an old tire in a ravine
full of trash, and she plays.
She has been selling at the market
since before the third grade.
Her future holds no diploma,
or dreams of a career,
Just a legal job at a maquila
when she turns fourteen.
She will never complain
of too much homework
Or even have a notebook
to practice her name.
She will grow out of
her childhood without dolls,
or Christmas presents,
or Playstation games.
She will frolic on her birthdays
with a homemade jumprope,
Without candles on a cake,
or wishes to make, or hope.
That girl with the cinnamon skin
Has eyes that rejoice
with simple pleasures,
Like gulping grape soda
Or a rare empanada treat,
or skipping over puddles
To fight off the heat.
Or simply with selling

all the pan dulce in her basket
and staying off her bare feet.
Her playful dimples don't reveal
her tired little soul --
Her smile so young,
and already so grown.
She could have been me
and I could have been her.
And I am.

Still, I hold on to my Starbucks and take one more sip,
Not thinking of the label on my shirt
Or the drink at my lips.
And it's bliss.

QUE GLORIOSO ES

Apurada al trabajo, tomando mi Starbucks, que poco tomo en cuenta las manos
que por mi se lastiman en cafetales ajenos.
Y que glorioso es.

Mi simple blusa de algodón
Comprada en tienda de categoría,
tiene algo en común con
una alfombra tejida
al otro lado del mundo.
Y ese punto en común
se esconde en las costurerías
de Bangladesh, El Salvador y Pakistan.
Y los acuerdos de comercio libre
Que pretenden proteger, donde estan?
Aquellos mercados de lujo
Donde fresas se convierten en licuados
Donde las verduras brillan tanto
Como los precios exagerados,
Tienen todo en común
Con las granjas migrantes de Kansas
Con las cosechas de fruta chilena
Con las plantaciones de Ecuador
Donde ya no hay aroma ni color,
Y la niñez se reemplaza,
con trabajo y con dolor.
En esos zapatos tenis nuevos
que anuncian en la tele,
cada puntada atestigua
el sudor y la fatiga de
corazoncitos que añoran juguetes.
Pero en vez de justicia, solo les toca
la crueldad de la codicia.

Aquella cipota que jamas conoceré
encuentra una llanta vieja
en un barranco, y juega
como si fuera la primera vez.
Ella empezó a vender en el mercado
antes de empezar el tercer grado.
En su futuro no habrá diploma,
ni carrera que ella goce.
Solo trabajo legal en maquila
al cumplir los catorce.
No tiene porque quejarse
por deberes escolares,
ni siquiera tiene cuaderno
donde escribir su nombre.
Se entretiene en su cumpleaños
saltando hule, sin pastel,
ni velas que apagar.
Dejará de ser niña
sin tener muñeca,
ni Playstation,
ni regalos de navidad.
A esa niña de piel morena
y pies descalzos
Se le alegran los ojos
con placeres simples,
como tomarse una gaseosa,
ó un mango ó chicharrón ,
ó brincar sobre charcos
para que no le de calor,
ó tan solo con vender
todo el pan dulce en su canasta.
Y por tener su llanta vieja,
ni extraña lo que le falta.
Aquellos camanances risueños
Esconden su alma cansada,
su sonrisa ya tan triste y resignada...
Ella pudo haber nacido en mi lugar,
Y yo en el de ella. Y así lo es.

Aun voy desatendida con mi Starbucks, y tomo otro sorbo,
Sin pensar en la etiqueta de mi camisa
Ni en el café Latte que gozo.
Y que glorioso es.

Justifications for child labor
By Gene Keller © - USA

Am I a bad man
simply because I'm fat?

I took this boy from the streets,

a piece of trash.

In the Parable of the Talents,
Jesus asks this boy
to invest his gifts:

his hands are
miniature precision instruments.

I taught him survival skills;
you want to fill his head
with numbers and letters.

His head is filled
with his own dreams -

a roaring crowd
as he spins and kicks
a goal with the side
of his educated foot -

and his belly is full,
but if he suffers,
well, the Buddha tells us
that is how to learn compassion.

Aren't we all equal here in Equador
and God the equalizer?

The boy wants black beans;
I want schnapps.

Our forefathers had slaves;
this is capitalism.
This boy is my bottomline.

Post war child
© Gino d'Artali - Belgium

As a post war child
I had choices.

Certainly, my family was poor,
but I had choices.

The work as a thirteen year old
was not hard,
because I had choices.

Back then it was not too hard
to make choices,
because I knew our social system
would still provide me
with choices.

40 odd years later
I know
not all children have choices.

Let me, if ever I can be,
be their voice.

Girl on her way to the weaving factory
By Job Degenaar - the Netherlands

It's silently accepted
that some children
will never be children

working through ages
used, abused
like animals

the world won't stop turning
when in the early morning
a little girl walks to a factory

for colourful weaving
the web of her poor life
in which she can't escape

while we from the sunny side
of the earth blindly turn our back
to shady places like hers.

Esferas
By Liza Di Georgina © - México

Sus ojos, enormes esferas de cristal,
miran oblicuos,
derramados en las banquetas
manchadas de olvido y desdén.
El rugido sordo de los autos
encamina los miedos que se estrellan en cristales ambarinos
mientras los raquíuticos cuerpos de pequeños fantasmas invisibles
tiritan en las esquinas:
niños de la calle,
niños del mundo,
niños de nadie.

Almas de papel cebolla
abortadas una mala noche de gritos y escupitajos,
niños del viento,
raíces rotas buscando su tierra
que no llega,
que no llega,
sueños abigarrados a un pañuelo de agua celeste,
migajas agrias que no son de pan.

Caen de nuevo las esferas de cristal,
grandes ojos de mis hijos
se dispersan por el suelo,
entre periódicos y gatos negros,
traspasados por millones de pasos ciegos.
Dime tú:
¿quién reclamará sus cuerpos azules cuando vengan a juzgarnos?

Plegaria

Nadie me enseñó a juntar mis manos a lo alto
por eso nunca lo hago,
no pregunto, no lloro,
y me trago los miedos en sorbos amargos.
Soy el hijo de una ciudad sin manos
enclavado en silencios anónimos,
eternos dedos tejedores y pies salados.
Mis mañanas saben a humo negro y a desierto,
y no, el sol no sale igual para todos,
no en los inclementes arrabales
por donde flotan sombras,
que nunca llegarán a ser hombres,
en el insoportable sobrevivir urbano
de luchar hasta por el aire.
Y sólo tengo siete años.

Dump Life

© **Michaela A. Gabriel, Vienna, Austria**

You never smelled sweet. Thavary,
girl in the torn dress you have grown into
and outgrown, flimsy sandals - scavenger
uniform bought with the wages of weeks
in this stench. Lucky you. Veata next door
owns nothing but a pair of patched pants.

You're quiet since the demons haunt you,
since you sank into garbage up to your
neck and screams would not cross your lips.
If only your feet hadn't touched ground, if only
the dump had swallowed you, an early grave,
you'd fulfill the promise of your name now,

you'd be forever dreaming of lined paper,
a teacher's smile to live on, pens to create
an odourless world, perhaps a whiff of baby
skin, brushes to paint your days the colour of
hope. Thavary, Cambodian angel, tailor yourself
a pair of wings, white plastic, perfect size. Fly.

Remembering pupil Federico

© **By Susan Morante - Philippines/Belgium**

Teacher's roll call,
Federico's name echoes,

"Absent again ma'am" classmates chorus.
He is in one of the old churches,
selling sweet smelling Sampaguita flowers
to devoted religious folks,
3 chains for 5 pesos
to offer to the Patron Senor Sto. Niño.

But here is one Niño , very much alive,
on the street from night 'till morning,
with no one to offer sweet smelling flowers
to adorn his naked ,tired, neck,
nobody cares, nobody sees , nobody knows!

I cried in anguish for you !my dear nino!
your face I see everyday
niños like you everywhere!
Small frail body with hungry stomach,
no shoes, dirty clothes!
Sleeping in the classroom
to wait for the night to shine again!

San titre
©Tamara Lai 2001 - Belgium

L'homme met en joue à bout portant
"Père, pas sur moi!" dit l'enfant
tourne la tête
tend la joue droite

L'homme roule un regard
rouge sang
ou gloire

"Petit con ! apprend
qu'on n'est respectable
qu'en vieillissant."
L'homme tire, l'enfant tombe.

L'homme tombe à son tour, lapidé
par une horde de petits cons déchaînés ;
l'enfant se tire.

YA pas de justice ?

© Usha Kishore - India-UK

The land is parched and dry -
We are beasts of burden -
We are yoked to father's plough-
All day, we till the land -

There is no water here, our
tears are dry - our bodies
burn in the sweltering heat -
All day, we till the land -

Our mates fly kites, they play
hide and seek; they laugh -
Our laughter is smothered by the air -
All day, we till the land -

Perhaps, angels will come our way -
Perhaps, they will take us away -
Perhaps, laughter will come back in tears -
All day, we till the land -

This poem is based on child labour in India. Recently, the plight of children, who were used as oxen by poverty-ridden farmers in Andhra Pradesh (South India) was brought to World attention by the media.

The Children

I walk towards the big shop with glittering glass-windows;
Saris fly out as rainbow parrots, they dance like peacocks
with gold-drenched feathers

Outside, a tiny girl stands with her tinier brother,
perched on her hips; they extend their hands and
search my soul with sunken eyes - they are not
children, they are miniature old people -
Their skins are papery, bones poke out of their bodies;
Rags hang from them - the girl touches my toes, her
stick hands tremble as she points to her stomach;
The little baby licks his tears; I ignore them and
walk into the shop

From among the lights, from among the enchanting
sari-birds, flapping their wings; from the glittering
glass windows, I look out - there they are!
She is touching toes again!
The baby's mouth is wide open in a scream -
Now, she sits down on the pavement, her brother
in one hand, her head in the other - the saris in my
arms, knot themselves into an albatross and strangle me

I come out laden with bags, I open my purse and pull
out a coin or two; my eyes search for the tiny girl and
her tinier brother - they are not there!
They have melted into the darkness -
Somewhere in my heart, a great weight falls -
Somewhere in my ears, a baby cries

Sari- Indian outfit

*Touching toes - a sign of respect in India. The street children touch the toes of passers
by and beg for money.*

This poem is based on the street children in India, who beg for a living.

Sisters of the Earth.
© By Zaida Lysle - USA

Picking the fruit
in scorching fields
day after day.
Today it is peaches,
but after these green
fields are picked clean,
we will be moving on
to the next patch
of blistering earth.
We never seem to get
the dirt completely out
from under our fingernails.

We go where the food is
strange beds new fields,
make-shift lives.
My mother and her mother
are lizard skinned.
We follow the crops
in the same way
the Native Americans
followed the Buffalo.

Always a strange bed,
another fragrant field.
Peaches today,
tomorrow who knows
what those fruit trees
will give birth to.
We never seem to get
the dirt completely out
from under our fingernails,
or the dust from our hair.
These hands look like
an old woman's hands,
I am only twelve.

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