

The song rounded in a whisper. A voice, so full of expression, gifted its concluding note to the breeze. As that breath joined the leaves in the trees, attentive ears were more attuned to their subtle undulation. Anna Maria Civico's intervention in the forest at a cultural festival in rural northeast Italy was a vital experience. I was overwhelmed by the unusual qualities of her voice and her physical presence as a performer. Her ability to evoke and form such strong memories is powerful. When I read Anna's recent text, I immediately saw it as a potential issue for *traverzine*. Like her singing voice, Anna's written words resonate, pertinently communicating empathy and engagement.

I asked a Turkish friend recently if she had seen *Gullistan, Land of Roses*, by Zeynep Aykol. The 2016 documentary follows the daily life of a Free Women's Unit of the Kurdistan Workers' Party. She replied, "Sarah, people are getting arrested just for saying no to war let alone watching the doc or even sharing it." Though filmed in a different region than that recently under attack, it represents the same fight. The women express their personal motives, the need for independence. As an intimate portrait of soldiers cleaning their rifles, of women brushing one another's hair, it could easily be criticised for romanticising their position. And yet the film's final scene is the most striking depiction of war I have ever seen. The director's keen choice of sound is particularly telling, reflecting deaths held over a battle for life.

The following piece of writing is for all those women who are still fighting for their voices to be heard.

Fragments of Voices

Digital images erupt, interrupting the paperbacks I've been reading these past few days. They are noisier than thoughts.

How can a creative artistic practice go on? How can it show the reality of that which pushes the divide?

Canto Voca is an ancient form of music (that no longer exists) for which I have one or two pieces of the puzzle. Its voices are with me, here and now, in front of images, unleashed from the net, flooding before the my eyes, I'm overwhelmed by terrified, terrorised and terrifying bodies. Devastated.

Closer to home, within my own social network, women's and children's bodies are being pressured

into oppressive corners of slavery, coercion, harassment, violence, exploitation, neglect and abandon. I try to limit my time arrested because I see freedom starting to disintegrate.

From the parade of those that have gone before me, the faces of Şehid Zin Amara and Hevrin Khalaf are still behind me, looking over my shoulder. Perhaps they're walking. They are as close as neighbourhoods, physically close. And, they neighboured those archaic musical worlds that I'm excavating; they too would have heard the sweet, woodwind sounds of the *blur* and *duduk*.

Faces, swollen and deformed through torture and death—parts of me died when they were killed.

The worst aspect of that ancient world is still with us. The reason for suffering is the same now as it was then. It grips. Its cry is still heard, echoing through traditional music. A lament disguised as melody. Its words, sweet, ambiguous: *adduna, ittisi, cora*. Fragments of that lament that precede the voice are hidden in the songs, as if clues.

Tragedy is still here. Our political voices cannot break through the divide. They fracture first.

And so I grasp onto a piece of writing I've been looking for over these past few days. Tragedy, in the Greek sense, is political. It defines how the voice that rises beyond this "tragic drama"—the voice of mourning and the oratorio—reveals tragedy in a completely different light—as "anti-political". Unlike the Assembly, which was responsible for collectivising and uniting citizens, tragic theatre relentlessly recalls that "politics" is essentially in conflict; women, non-citizens who shouldered the burden of mourning the dead that the city-state would have preferred to forget, evidence the conflicting values and different attitudes that remained beneath the divisions used by the city-state to glorify elimination. And herein lies the real tragedy: the "bond of division" reminds us over the centuries that "conflict leads to unity more surely and more solidly than any process of consensus." Reference to *The Mourning Voice*, an essay on Greek tragedy by Nicole Loraux.



traverzine
issue 3: voicing concern

Considerate thoughts are a powerful means of reaching beyond divides—true empathy travels a long way.

traverzine is a platform for those interested in exploring and sharing ideas about contemporary travel. The zine traverses issues regarding leisure, work and migration through direct experience. It is a means to communicate how travel might be perceived differently at a time of great environmental and political change. Writing submitted for publication should be no more than 1,200 words or 7,000 characters with spaces in length. Images should be 10.5 x 7.5 cm at 300 pixels per inch. Please send all submissions to: info@traverzbooks.net

This issue was written by Anna Maria Civico (www.annamariacivico.it) and introduced by Sarah Waring. It is the first bilingual publication of the zine, translated by Viviana Gasparella and Sarah, and proofed by Costanza Travaglini and Giovanni Nimis.

Şehid Zin Amara was a Women's Protection Unit commander and Hevrin Khalaf was a civil engineer and Secretary General for the Future Syria Party.



traverzine, issue 3, Nov 2019, www.traverzbooks.net
cover: Tomb of the Dancing Women, Naples National Archaeological Museum

