

# Consequence



Consequence Volume 16:2

# Consequence

A literary journal produced by Consequence Forum  
addressing the human consequences, experiences,  
and realities of war and geopolitical violence  
through literature and art

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Founded by George Kovach

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## Consequence

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# BIPOC Feature

## Poetry

Benin Lemus	Sonnet for Survivors	1
Marianne Chan	William Howard Taft	39
José Edmundo		
Ocampo Reyes	Letter to Topeka	40
Tope Larayetan	Nigerian Woman Fills Form in America	41
Zeina Azzam	Full Moon, October 28, 2023	67
	In This World There Is So Much to	
	Apologize for	69
Saddiq Dzukogi	January 20th, 2024	70
	January 9th, 2024	71
Iain Haley Pollock	Children & War Chiasmic Loop	81
	Americana	83
Chris Santiago	5.1 ( <i>Initial Operations: Neutral Zones</i> )	90
	15.1-15.3 ( <i>Withdrawal</i> )	91
Eileen R. Tabios	Towards the Limits of Bibliolepsy	100
Sony Ton-Aime	The Seer Foresees Frantz Fanon on the	
	Eve of the Bois Caïman Ceremony	128
Aileen Cassinetta	Let Me Call You Sweetheart	140
Abdulrazaq Salihu	Review I.	148
	Quantum Entanglement	149
Aaron Caycedo-Kimura	Garbage Can	150
Hassan A. Usman	Coming from Havoc	151
	Liberosis	153
	To Learn Something as Tender as Muteness	154
Chiagoziem Jideofor	Lesser Crops	155
	in today's terms	157
	the blessings of a bird	158

## Fiction

Danny Ramadan	The Elusive Mrs. Omran	2
JJ Amaworo Wilson	Euphoria	72
Marianne Villanueva	The Desolation	84

## Nonfiction

Mona Ghuneim	Mazmiz	20
Tabinda Khurshid	The Childhood	26
S. J. Ghaus	The Time Is Now on the Clock of the World	61
Miko Yoshida	Into the Fold	101
Key K. Bird	How to Unharden a Heart	129
Grace Talusan	The Nightmares He Carried	143

## Translations

Mian Mian <i>tr. Liang Yujing</i>	A Ukrainian Woman in Barcelona	38
Appadurai Muttulingam <i>tr. Jegadeesh Kumar</i>	The New Wife	93
Roxana Crisólogo <i>trs. Kim Jensen and Judith Santopietro</i>	[Ali has huge arms] I would like to ride on a Vespa The woman drags her heavy dress	159 161 162

## Visual Art

Leslie Brown	The Art of Leslie Brown	52
Marcus P. Blackwell	The Art of Marcus P. Blackwell	56
Lehua M. Taitano	The Art of Lehua M. Taitano	126



## Poetry

Jehanne Dubrow	We Lived in Another Century of War	46
Miriam Bassuk	Why I Am Impatient for Peace	47
George Kalogeris	Meat Hooks	111

## Fiction

Robert B. Miner	Art Therapy for Army Brats	43
Ben Jackson	Midnight at the General	112

## Translations

George Seferis <i>tr. Jennifer Kellogg</i>	Chorale from <i>Mathew Paschalis, Prisoner of War</i>	48
Shaaban Robert <i>tr. Richard Prins</i>	Mkwawa	50
Muyaka bin Haji al-Ghassaniy <i>tr. Richard Prins</i>	[two big fish] [we are manly lions]	51 51
Sodéh Negintaj <i>tr. Ali Asadollahi</i>	Collective Suffering	123
Arzu Karadağ <i>trs. Mete Özel and Jeffrey Kabrs</i>	Singing Woman	125

Contributors' Notes		164
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Roxana Crisólogo

BIPOC Feature Section

*Translated from Spanish by Kim Jensen and Judith Santopietro*

**[Ali has huge arms]**

Look at my arms *Miis*  
thanks to these two rolls of choice meat  
I crossed the Mediterranean  
it's better than paying to die drowning next to women  
who can't win over the sea  
they die strangled in their own robes  
taking the family jewels down with them and a baby in their arms  
touch the openings of each of my fingers  
callouses scars  
these arms, *Miis*, are everything that I am  
that's why I had the guts to throw myself to the sea

You'll never find hands like these  
if you want to take a picture  
buy one of these souvenirs to decorate your home  
African wood *Miis* like these hands that are searching for their place  
a little help so I can keep on traveling  
I won't charge you for the story

of how I hung from the heaving boat  
that was the deal  
jump on when you hear the motors  
you won't find anyone else who will do this for you

What you see now  
is not the ocean that I held with every ounce of strength  
thinking only  
of the cargo I could carry from one side to the other  
in less than half the time less than half my life  
in neat rows of suitcases lined up in airports  
in the tall containers loaded with baskets and Fair Trade



chocolate arriving from Africa  
just like us  
who also come by sea

No one knows what it's like to soar through the furious foam of the waves  
nor how to resist the utter indifference of god  
the sea is not the enemy  
the sea is friendly look at it now  
it's the same one that wanted to toss me out of the boat

Today it's calm and bright you can dive in and gaze at the bottom  
as for me I can see right through it

— ❦ —

*Translated from Spanish by Kim Jensen and Judith Santopietro*

**I would like to ride on a Vespa**

but then I met Austen

5 years

without a passport

a family to feed

On the Vespa I wanted to forget that I came here

to write Austen's story

without having to cross a border

or think in Austen's words

or imagine Austen

trying to unsee those gazes swept away by the sea

I wanted to fly like everyone else who soars carefree

on a waft of sunshine

to lose myself on a Vespa

to veer onto narrow streets as elusive

as forgetfulness

The woman who writes is called beautiful

I call myself something more humane

but I keep my words to myself

A wet blanket    yes

I come to bombard them with questions that the Sun smears

with tanning oil

No

it is not the time they tell me

Walk on the sunny side of the street

close your eyes    soak it in    start the Vespa

and fly over the hills on the road to Taormina

Look at the soft fingers of the stones

clutching to the turquoise depths

the luminous little fishes dragged away by the sea



— ❦ —

*Translated from Spanish by Kim Jensen and Judith Santopietro*

**The woman drags her heavy dress**

with the conviction of those who have nothing more to explain  
her hands are attached to a stroller that flashes  
like a clatter of light in a dark village  
She glides across the snow the way the dark village  
throws open wide the veins of a narrow street  
upon which she'll descend as if it were an immense desert  
and we South Americans  
watch her from the café with the jaded bitterness  
of those who also have nothing more to explain

The revolution has yet to take shape in the air  
and the sugar cubes we restlessly  
drop into little cups that we sip just as slowly  
as our moment here feels like enemy parts  
of our bodies

and it's not clear on which side of the dialectic  
the sun will set

Swaddled in comfortable coats  
we size up the woman's body and the carriage she's pushing  
as if it were a tractor that could stir up the earth  
as if instead of transporting a child she were pushing an entire house  
with its noises and conditions and courtyards  
in which rifles and bodies were once piled high

A culture can't be carried from place to place  
under so much clothing

but the woman — indisputably — moves forward

We are talking about words that have nothing more to say  
we flee from the sounds that remind us of what it's like to be over there