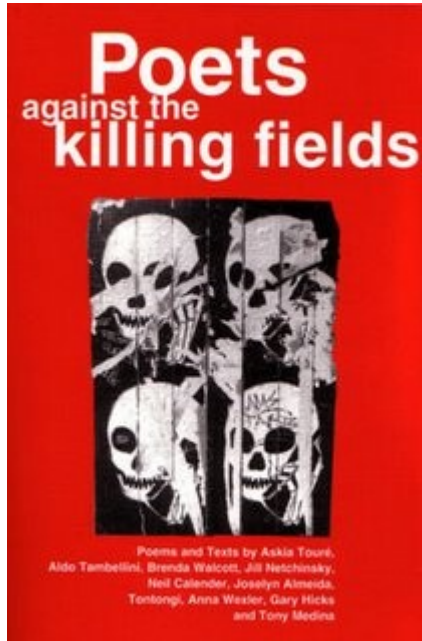


*Review by Richard Wilhelm*

## **POETS AGAINST THE KILLING FIELDS**



(Anthology); Trilingual Press;  
Cambridge, MA; \$12.95

If you can turn off “American Idol,” forget for a moment the Red Sox and the Patriots, and take a hard look at the phase of late capitalism in which we find ourselves here in America, in 2007, you might just want to vomit. More likely you would have tuned back into “American Idol” long before you got to that point. The various poets of this anthology are not going to let you do that. They have your head in a vice and toothpicks propping your eyes open. And you are going to look. And you WILL see.

They shouldn’t have to do that to you. You could have seen for yourself. It’s a matter of record that Al Gore won the 2000 election. It’s a matter of record that the United States invaded Iraq for reasons having nothing to do with America’s security. It’s laughable that Saddam Hussein would have anything to do with Islamic jihadists like al-Qaeda. Contrary to the blatant lies of George W. Bush, the US has introduced torture as a standard operating procedure in interrogating detainees regardless of how much evidence there may or may not be that they are involved with terrorists. Waterboarding is a method of torture used as far back as the Inquisition. How interesting that torture is instituted by a President that used to enjoy blowing up frogs as a kid. But I digress.

The US turned Iraq, which had a large middle class and was a developed nation, albeit under dictatorial rule, into a nightmarish hell-hole. And the US will not leave even when Iraq’s oil is in the hands of American oil companies. Iraqi families have seen their loved ones gunned down or imprisoned almost at random by either rival militias, gangs of thugs or US troops.

My point here is that all too many Americans are oblivious to the

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suffering of others around the world even when that suffering is directly caused by the US or its client, Israel. All too many Americans are oblivious that our country is moving closer to authoritarianism every day. And this anthology may make you uncomfortable if you are one of the oblivious. And if you are, read deeply then throw your TV remote in the trash; become a citizen of the world. Let yourself address the “small girl playing with bullets found on war ground” as Aldo Tambellini does in “March 14, 2005.”

has the killing bullet  
replaced your toy doll innocence  
after your baptism by fire  
did your parents survive

“In A Shout for Yusuf Hawkins,” Jill Netchinsky writes:

Bensonhurst  
cardboard theater figures  
drunk Italian inlaws  
a gun on New Year’s Eve  
Veterans reminisce  
“Let’s go beat up some niggahs”

The Poets Against the Killing Fields are here to tell you that the world is experienced very differently by third-world people under the thumb of US imperialism, and by working people and people of color here in America, than the unfair and unbalanced networks like Faux News would have you believe. Perhaps as you peruse these pages the scales will fall off your eyes as well and you too will find your clenched fist beginning to rise. Now say it with me: Fuck “American Idol!”