

PALESTINIAN POETRY

ACTIVITY FOR ALL AGES

This activity has 2 parts:

- It starts with reflection through poetry.
- It ends with using that reflection to plan for actions we can take for Palestine.

INTRODUCTION

Did you know that poetry can be a way to resist (that means push back against) things that are unfair? Did you know that poetry can be a way to move toward justice and a better world? **Poets in Palestine have always known!**



The people of Palestine know a lot about injustice and fighting against it. For over a hundred years, people have been coming to Palestine and using violence to take away and control their land and their homes (what we call “occupation” or “colonization”).

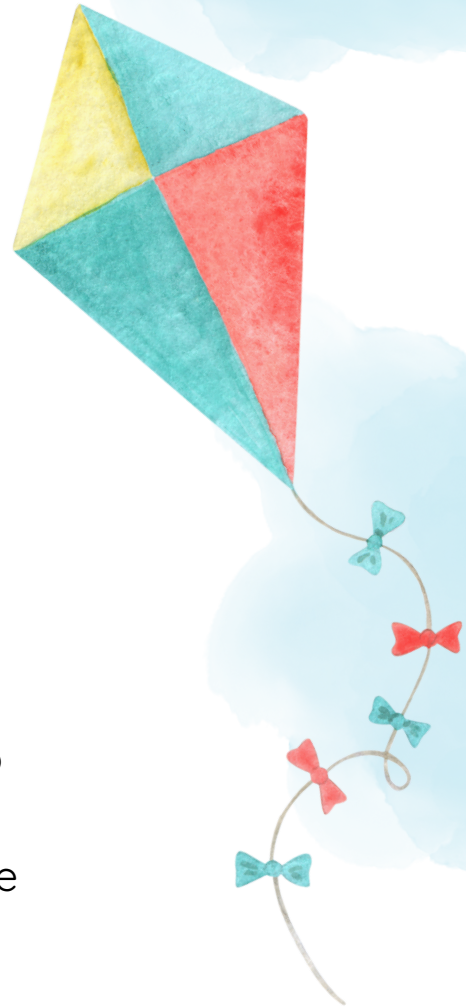
During all this time, Palestinians have been writing poems to tell the world about themselves, their homeland, and the things they believe in.

One of those poems is on the next page. It talks about death but also about hope.

READING

If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings,
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself—
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up
above
and thinks for a moment an angel is there
bringing back love
If I must die
let it bring hope
let it be a tale.

Refaat Alareer



**Ask if an older kid in
the group can read
the poem aloud!**

The poet who wrote this poem, Refaat Alareer, was killed by the army of Israel (the government occupying Palestine) in December, 2023, along with so many other Palestinian people. This is part of the injustice and violence that comes from occupation. We can honor his legacy by participating in the movement for a free Palestine.

PART 1

FOR LITTLE ONES

- Hand out pieces of paper. If you want, you can cut them into a kite shape.
- Explain: “The poem talks about the feeling of hope. The poet wants the children of Gaza, in Palestine, to have hope for a better future.”
- Prompt: “Close your eyes and think about a time when you felt hope. If that feeling was a sound, what would it be? If it was a taste, what would it be?”
 - Invite children to draw what they have described on their papers.
 - Invite children to share their drawing, and the idea it represents.
- Share: A photo of Palestinian children breaking the world record for flying 12,350 kites at once in 2011 (see below)
- Prompt: “What do you see?” “What do you wonder?” “What do you feel?”
- Explain: “We are going to have our own kite flying party with our drawings” Tell children that they can give their kite drawings to an adult who will throw them into the air like confetti to make our kites fly!



PART 1

FOR OLDER KIDS/TEENS

- Hand out pieces of paper. If you want, you can cut them into a kite shape.
- The poem compares hope to a kite. Can you think of an object (or a food, or a smell, or a place) that feels like hope to you?
- Can you take 5-10 minutes and use your answer to the previous question to write a poem about your hopes for Palestine in the future on the paper?
 - If you're not sure where to start, try describing the symbol of hope you chose. What does it feel, sound, smell like?
 - It's okay to include other feelings too, like anger.

FOR AN INTERGENERATIONAL OR MIXED AGE GROUP

- Tell the group that we're going to write/create a community poem. Give everyone a few minutes to respond in 1-5 words to one of the following prompts:
 - What is something that gives you hope for the future of Palestine right now?
 - What is one thing you hope for the Palestinian people?
- Stand in a circle. The facilitator can start by stating the prompt question. Then, each person says their contribution to the poem.

PART 2

FOR ANY GROUP (GROWN-UPS CAN HELP YOUNGER KIDS THINK OF ACTIONS)

REFLECT: What does the poem ask us, the reader, to do?

SHARE: What is one action each person in the group has taken or learned about to help make real our hopes for Palestine?

PLAN: Notice one action that someone else in the group mentions, that you haven't taken yet. Make a plan to do it in the next few days!