



PEN Canada and the Toronto Women's Bookstore proudly present

Our Song Marches On: Bread and Roses Writings in honour of International Women's Day

Featuring PEN Canada writers and members:

Emma Beltrán, Petronila Cleto, Jackleen Hanna, Farzana Hassan and Fereshteh Molavi

Thursday, March 15th at 7pm

Toronto Women's Bookstore, 73 Harbord Street (at Spadina)

Free admission. All welcome.

Co-sponsored by the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre and the Institute for Women's and Gender Studies, University of Toronto

Biographies:

Immigrated to Canada in 1998, **Fereshteh Molavi** is an Iranian native writer who has worked as a bibliographer and scholar, as well as a freelance editor and translator. While still in Iran, she published *The House of Cloud and Wind*, and *The Sun Fairy*. *Listen to the Reed*, a chapbook published by PEN Canada in 2005, is based on her dialogue with Karen Connelly. Molavi has been included in anthologies, among them, *Afsaneh: Short Stories by Iranian Women* and *Speaking in Tongues: PEN Canada Writers in Exile*. Her latest collection of short stories in Persian, *The Wandering Nightingale*, was released in Tehran in 2006.

Farzana Hassan is author of *Islam, Women and the Challenges of Today*. She is currently President of the Muslim Canadian Congress and is enrolled in a doctoral program in educational leadership. Her previous publication, *Echoes from the Abyss*, focuses on human trafficking in South Asia.

As part of the late 1960s radical and political student movement at the University of the Philippines, **Petronila Cleto** went into theatre organizing among out-of-school youth and working students, and also into child education among the urban poor of Manila. Surviving Ferdinand Marcos's martial law in the 70s, which forced the student movement underground, she became a journalist, well-known for her investigative reporting on human rights stories, socio-economic issues as well as feminist issues. Cleto came to Canada with her daughter, Cynthia Lilia, in the early 1990s. She is currently working on a project to advocate for the journalists in her country, a series of travel poems, and on her first novel.

Emma Beltrán is a poet and activist from Mexico. Since 1994, she has been involved in the struggle of indigenous peoples facilitating poetry and popular theatre workshops for women and children throughout Mexico. She was a founding member of the first community radio station in Mexico's history during the student strike at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in 1999. This work caused her to be subject to political charges, kidnapping and

Artscape's Gibraltar Point International Artist Residency Program in 2005. Her poetry has been published in various literary journals and anthologies. She was a Exiled- Writer-in-Residence at the University of Windsor during the spring of 2006. Beltran is currently a participant of the Wired Writing Studio at The Banff Centre in Alberta.

Jackleen Hanna, who writes under the pen name Jackleen Salam, emigrated to the GTA from Syria in 1998. In 2005 she became the editor of *jozoor/roots*, an on-line magazine for Arab writers in the Canadian and American Diaspora. A social activist, Jackleen has been particularly active concerning Arab and abused women's rights, human rights and freedom of expression. She has published her poems and articles in well-know newspapers and magazines in the Middle East (*Assafir*, *Azzaman*, *Asharq Alawsat*, *Adab wa Fan* and *Awan*). Readers of Arabic can learn more about Jackleen by visiting her Web site: www.jackleensalam.com.

PEN Canada works on behalf of writers, at home and abroad, who have been forced into silence for writing the truth as they see it. PEN Canada is for debate and against silence. We lobby governments in Canada and internationally; organize petitions; send letters, faxes and postcards for the release of persecuted writers; and conduct public awareness campaigns about freedom of expression. We work for the release of imprisoned writers internationally, against censorship nationally and for networking and professional opportunities for writers living in exile in Canada.

For more information please contact Anjula Gogia at 416-703-8448 x23 or agogia@pencanada.ca, or visit www.pencanada.ca or www.womensbookstore.com.