

## THINGS WE CARRY ON THE SEA

Wang Ping

We carry tears in our eyes: good-bye father, good-bye mother

We carry soil in small bags: may home never fade in our hearts

We carry names, stories, memories of our villages, fields, boats

We carry scars from proxy wars of greed

We carry carnage of mining, droughts, floods, genocides

We carry dust of our families and neighbors incinerated in mushroom clouds

We carry our islands sinking under the sea

We carry our hands, feet, bones, hearts and best minds for a new life

We carry diplomas: medicine, engineer, nurse, education, math, poetry, even if they mean nothing to the other shore

We carry railroads, plantations, laundromats, bodegas, taco trucks, farms, factories, nursing homes, hospitals, schools, temples . . . built on our ancestors' backs

We carry old homes along the spine, new dreams in our chests

We carry yesterday, today and tomorrow

We're orphans of the wars forced upon us

We're refugees of the sea rising from industrial wastes

And we carry our mother tongues

爱(ai), حب (hubb), ליבע (libe), amor, love

平安 (ping'an), سلام (salaam), shalom, paz, peace

希望 (xi'wang), أمل ('amal), hofenung, esperanza, hope, hope, hope

As we drift . . . in our rubber boats . . . from shore . . . to shore . . . to shore . . .