

## Featured Poet Mobi Warren

### War Poems

#### Gulf of Thailand, 1977

a cloth bundle bobs over the spot  
where the refugee boat sank  
camphor leaks into the black water  
and carefully folded clothes  
faint like loosened limbs

#### Kurdish Iraq, 1990

cicadas  
clinging to shards of persimmon bark  
rattle a dirge

a mass grave is found  
twelve and thirteen-year-old students  
executed one afternoon

investigators find school notebooks  
scattered nearby  
neatly jotted notes  
from algebra class

#### Sarajevo, 1995

no flowers left  
the old woman plants quilting needles  
on the bewildered graves of children

the war severs  
all sense of direction  
yet overhead,  
as they have for centuries  
wild geese trace true north

#### Fracking the Eagle Ford

In a dream I held four  
pebbles in my mouth  
to slake thirst during a hundred year drought.

Four words,  
syllables of the sacred.

I awoke singing  
hymen  
hymenoptera  
foramen  
foraminifera

and wanted to dance a Circle  
over the Eagle Ford Shale  
to cleanse what we have done.

Children born in a time of shattered rock  
and the reckless burn of carbon,  
forgive us.

Hymen  
We force Water, Giver of Life, into a weapon  
to sunder the Mother's hidden membranes.  
We plunder glittering fossil beds,  
foraminifera,  
the ancient reefs beneath our feet.  
We are grave robbers  
who burn cradles.

We forsake the wild bees,  
hymenoptera, community-minded insects,  
whose dance of take is also a dance of give back.  
We erase their courtship  
of horsemint and paintbrush,  
star-faced phlox  
flowers powered by the sun  
whose spidery roots find paths  
through rock  
by becoming one with it.

Foramen  
For the Children Amen  
Hold a newborn in your arms.  
Place a light hand over the pulse  
at the crest of her skull, the soft spot  
where hint of sea still murmurs,  
child swathed in wonder.

She needs clear water,  
unmolested land, mild air.  
They will be gone.

*In 1973, Warren left Ancient Greek studies at UT Austin to become a full-time volunteer with the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation in Paris, headed by the poet-activist monk, Thích Nhất Hạnh. She went on to translate several works by Nhất Hạnh, including his Fragrant Palm Leaves: Journals 1962-1966. She is the*



*founder of 350SanAntonio, a local affiliate of 350.org, the international grassroots campaign for climate action. Recently, she was the poetry curator for the Bihl Haus Arts exhibit "HOT!: Artists Respond to Climate Change." Her poems have appeared in the Texas Poetry Calendar, San Antonio Express-News, Texas Observer, in VIA buses, as a Tupelo Press 30/30 poet, and in several anthologies. By day, she is a middle school math teacher with San Antonio ISD, a vocation she absolutely loves.*