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Betty Gilmore

I am shoved into the alleys
squeezed and crushed between the lines
left hanging sideways on the walls
shut away in empty boxes.

There is no unclaimed property
no space
no choice
except to sneak in silently
from the peripheries
of this game
started somewhere back in time.
(‘Bittter Pill’ Ed. Cox 18, no copyright)

author biography

Betty Gilmore was born in Oklahoma, grew up in Los Angeles, and presently resides in Milan, Italy. She is a poet and singer of jazz and blues, and she combines poetry and music in performances designed to recuperate the historical context in which they developed.

The history of African Americans told through music and poetry is Betty Gilmore’s main interest, although she sees it as a point of reference to address other experiences. She also develops theatre performances involving non-professional actors, and has an on-going project called ‘Beauty Secrets’ involving self-image.

She began writing seriously as a member of the Feminist Studio Workshop at the Woman’s Building in Los Angeles where she studied graphics under Sheila Levrant De Bretteville, whose attention to socially significant artwork had a strong influence on her creative development.

In Milan, she’s the cultural coordinator for an association (Cittadini Dal Mondo) of immigrants and Italians who work to improve immigration legislation and the cultural relationships between Italians and immigrants. She writes for the theatre group ‘Sotto il Cavolfiore’ (Under A Cauliflower) which performs stories about their personal experiences by non-professional actresses, combining music, art, poetry and dialogue.

Betty Gilmore has published articles and short stories and a book of poetry with a musical CD called ‘Bitter Pill’ (Ed. Cox 18).

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