

## Poetry. War. Peace. Justice.

What's poetry got to do with peace? This is a question often posed to SPF Director Professor Stuart Rees, who taught a postgraduate unit - Passion, Peace and Poetry - at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. For Prof Rees, poetry is a powerful medium that provides insights into peace and is a record of war and peace. Poetry always needs more airing than war talk, he said. It is in this spirit that the Bulletin features two of Prof Rees' poems.

### LETTER FROM A SOLDIER

Clouds are low over Baghdad,  
another friend died today but the  
leaders say, 'don't be depressed  
about war.'

The nights look like lasting for ever,  
I don't want to die here but the lead-  
ers say, 'don't be depressed about  
war.'

The sun sinks, the dawn will never  
come, so use my death to tell these  
leaders, 'end this pointless war.'

My words are not allowed to be  
heard,  
I must wait for death, so tell these  
leaders, 'end this pointless war.'

The President dodged the draft,  
the Vice President had other priori-  
ties, the warmongers' children never  
fight, no-one speaks of Iraqi grief or  
deaths, no-one can humanize the  
horrors.

The rest of the nation may be shop-  
ping  
but the poor and the dark are dying.  
Please explain my disgust with this  
government though their leaders  
may say, 'don't be depressed about  
war.'

*Stuart Rees  
Madrid 15 August 07*

### FROM MARRICKVILLE TO BETHLEHEM

This twinning nurtures sanity  
in opposition to mayhem,  
a gesture for humanity  
for little town of Bethlehem.

Once holy place of vestments,  
of shepherds' lands and picnic banks  
now strangled by the settlements  
sustained by mercenaries and tanks.

For human rights please stand in  
droves  
and summon courage to be tall  
against the theft of olive groves  
against that sacrilegious wall

Which separates and treats like  
stone  
the people who, let's make it clear,  
should be surrounded, left alone  
by sharpening the wedge of fear.

But being twins can nullify  
that military monologue  
that force of arms disqualifies  
the precious means of dialogue.

And so the Council sees the prize  
of reaching out and finding will  
to share and talk not demonize,  
Congratulations Marrickville.

*Stuart Rees  
Sydney 17 June 07*

*\*\* on occasion of Marrickville Council  
moving to twin with Bethlehem*

 Tickets for this year's City of Sydney Peace Prize Lecture are now on sale. Thanks to all our friends and supporters who have already purchased the tickets to the eagerly awaited lecture by Dr Hans Blix on **7 November 2007** at the **Sydney Town Hall**.

You can purchase your tickets online from Ticketek ([click here](#)) or call 132 849. (Be quick, they're selling fast!)

Former Australian Prime Minister **The Hon Paul Keating** will present the Sydney Peace Prize to Dr Blix on **8 November 2007** at an

Award Ceremony and Gala Dinner at the **Great Hall, University of Sydney**. For enquiries and bookings for the Gala Dinner, please contact us at [spf@arts.usyd.edu.au](mailto:spf@arts.usyd.edu.au)

[Click here](#) for details to both events. We look forward to seeing you in November