2011
Redwood Coast
Peace Poetry Anthology
Cover Photo

*Big Island, Hawaii - Volcanic Peace* (modified)

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2011 Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Anthology

A Collection of Poems on the Subject of Peace and Non-violence by Humboldt County High School Students

Edited by the Veterans’ Education and Outreach Project of Veterans For Peace, Inc., Humboldt Bay Chapter 56
Peace

even in times of unrest
should be the goal of
all human communities.

The Redwood Coast
Peace Poetry Contest
is an attempt to
focus on peace in a
very troubled world.
We dedicate this Anthology to our friend and comrade

Fred Hummel
1926–2011

WWII US Navy Veteran
Former Mayor of Brookings, Oregon
Staunch supporter of Veterans for Peace
Founding member of the Veterans’ Education and Outreach Project
Tireless worker in the cause of peace and justice

Photo by ‘Nate’ Lomba
Veterans For Peace, Inc.

Our Mission

Veterans For Peace is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational and humanitarian organization dedicated to the abolishment of war.

Statement of Purpose

We, having dutifully served our nation, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end we will work, with others:

(a) To increase public awareness of the costs of war;
(b) To restrain our government from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations;
(c) To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons;
(d) To seek justice for veterans and victims of war;
(e) To abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

To achieve these goals, members of Veterans For Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.
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Acknowledgments

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Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Humboldt Unitarian Universalists Fellowship Social Action Committee

— Judges —

Allen Berger
David Holper
Lynn Kerman
Jerry Martien
Pat McCutcheon
Joe Shermis

— Assistance —

The VEOP Committee gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of VFP Chapter 56 and the Chapter members that helped make this contest a rousing success.
I Have No Color

My beautiful lady
I am your love and your hate
Your happiness and your despire¹

When my heart is blazing up hot
You’re the water to my fire

I walk through the garden of pain that leads
To the garden of pleasure
I find you in a bundle of roses and see
That you’re my shining treasure

You open your eyes and
Put the stars in the skies
You smile with the
Morning as you make the bright
Sun rise

Your beauty pulls me
Down to your lips and you
Speak in my ear

You put your hand on
My heart and say that this dream is pure

But I’m seeing your figure
And it’s like no other
And you say I am love and I have no color

David E. Rogers
Eureka High School
Eureka, California

[¹] Term coined by author (verbally confirmed).
**Human Souls**

Have you let yourself be beaten down, did you fight and still end up on the ground?
Listen when I say it doesn’t have to be this way.
Raise up your weary hands once more and I promise this time you won’t be ignored,
tickle the chin of father time, let the laughter sing you.
Find embrace where nothing lay before, because there is love.
I’ll paint this story into your eyes but only if you let me.
Together.
Do you even understand?
Together.
We can curse or bless each other.
Can you hear that faint sigh beyond the tree tops, deep in the hearts of man, a softly moaned lullaby of rainless tears?
It is all of us.
Exhaling.
We are tired and ill of manufactured screams.
Lace fingers, lock eyes, cry a blissful ocean and raise the hairs of the earthly spine, she grew us.
You’ll never be able to explain murder to her, but she can show you love.
Love more intoxicating than any pleasure.
Love that breeds peace, for every mind, for every body, for every soul.
How could you possibly resist her?
I know you’ve all felt her before, when your alone face upturned soaked in moon glow, shadows streaking your cheeks, you felt her in your chest and you brought your fingers there and your eyes, you were so curious,
a symphony of simultaneity,
rising, falling, all as one.
Intensity collapses you but you are left with no wounds.
Inhale slowly. We take our first breath.

Ashley Feraru
Six Rivers Charter High School
Arcata, California
Poor Teddy Bear

A sad little bear sits on a shelf
old and tattered and tired of itself
long ago it was happy and loved
but now it just sits there needing a hug
it misses it’s friends, the horse and the lark
the hedgehog, and the monster, as it waits in the dark
they would all sit around, laughing to tears
but one by one, they all disappeared
until all that was left was the poor teddy bear
sitting sad and alone next to an old rocking chair
it waits and waits to be disappeared too
That’s the only thing left it can think of to do
but as day turns to night and night into day
it can only watch as the world wastes away
for when they came with their bombs and chemical warfare
they took out the sun, they polluted clean air
and they said it was for freedom and quality of living
but they didn’t foretell people everywhere dying
now the only ones left are decaying and infected
with the ragged bear that sits alone and rejected
it will never be noticed or played with again
because for all living things that day was the end
I fear this day will actually happen
our future destroyed by our vengeful actions
the world torn apart by petty human emotions
ripping up earth and trashing the oceans
but the thing I hate most about this future affair
is that there are no people left for that poor teddy bear

Casey Lynn
Arcata High School
Arcata, California
*** Third Honors Award Recipient ***
Serenity Sets Sail

The Golden Rule
swings out into
sparkling Humboldt Bay
waters,
with the wind in her sails
and deep-tree vitality
breathed anew into her weathered masts.

Former soldiers
as patient as the redwoods
found a way
to give her wings again.

She shimmers
across the surface
like a pond-skipping
dragonfly,
away towards our dreams
on some unforeseen shore.
Really,
none of us lives
for tooth and claw,
arrow and scar.
We live for the scent
of sunlit grass,
for a young child’s laugh
upon seeing a snail
for the first time.
And this little boat
keeps her promise to the sunset,
venturing into the horizon
on her mission of peace.

Our hearts
go with her.

Amy Fontaine
McKinleyville High School
McKinleyville, California
*** First Honors Award Recipient ***
Poem 2

Gracefully floating through a breathy sigh, it yearns to be loved.
It’s meaning unique and special so much to someone, something,
Yet it can never be found unless looked for.
This one purrs when stoked with affection.
And lingers in the palm, crying softly when asked to leave.
That one comforting one-syllable word that cushions on a conscience, As a
ribbon of air, flowing under a wing.
Peace.

Dripping with a history of pain and loss.
It bares its fangs and smirks at the delicious opportunity.
This one knows how to play with fire.
And with decaying masochism embraces the salted wounds and burning scars.
Yet sadistic and cunning it knows not when to stop.
Knows not when its tyranny will start to bore,
Until it has no one left to devour.
War.

“Why must you hurt and kill the things I love?” cried Peace, once again.
“Why, dear Peace, it is really quite simple,” snickered War, seething insincerity.
“I do it to survive, my love, I must! I thrive off pain, I bathe in sorrow, and
hungrily lap from the wounds of betrayal.
Darling Peace, do you not do the same? You laugh among these entities which
cause me harm. You thrive off bliss, you bathe in love, and dance about the sky
leaving footprints of rest. You are what I’m not.”
Peace and War, eternally dancing on a balancing scale,
Both envy a little piece of one another.
But never seem to notice.
Yet let it be known,
That the kind-hearted peace,
Had kissed a little of itself through War’s poisonous shell.
Just enough so that War’s prisoners
There fighting on the battlefield,
Know the pain of what they’re doing and
Know the sweet touch of mercy.

Belinda Mitchell-Rice
Northcoast Preparatory and Performing Arts Academy
Arcata, California
*** Honorable Mention Award Recipient ***
Reconciliation of a Soldier’s Winter

I found you in the middle of winter,
Dangling your feet in the torrents of a bitter river.
Your toes were blushing with the cold,
And your arms were pickled with goosebumps.
Your breath was becoming slower and slower
And rattled in your chest like lead bullets in a rusting tin.
I called out to you, tried to entreat you inside,
But as I spoke, your achromatic eyes broke
And poured into your sanguine hands.
Your quivering lips dipped deeper in shades of cobalt
As they stuttered your reply,
“I’m too dirty, too dirty.”
Where the skin of your pallid body was thinner
I could see your veins solidifying.
Cords of fading cerulean
Transforming you into crystal.
Yet the crimson stained across your palms
Wouldn’t pale with the algid temperatures,
Just deepened its flush with each frigid degree.
“I’m too dirty, too dirty.”
And then you plunged yourself under
The alabaster froth of a bitter cataract.
Disappearing from beneath the silver eyes
Of the winter sky, which judged you so harshly,
Beneath the violent rapids,
Beneath the abating air,
Your soul found concord,
Your palms release, amity!
And your heart washed clean in conciliation.
In death you found peace.

Rowan Parker
Northcoast Preparatory and Performing Arts Academy
Arcata, California
Peace is a better place for everyone
And Earth has water to give everyone
To drink and keep everyone healthy
And work out at the gym
And earth has land, cars, trucks, and boats
And ships too
Earth is lovely and rain grows flowers
And grass too
And the rain can grow things healthy and strong
And a sunny day for everyone too
Play in the summertime.

Brittany Boudreaux
Eureka High School
Eureka, California
Peace is for

I said,
There’s no such thing
Not a single word
Not a phrase
Not a term, called:

Peace

In a time of war, in the edge of reality
I said,
What a word
What a phrase
What a term, the thing called:

Peace

Is the name for impossibility, or
A core of
A heart of
A shell, of
Chaotic shadows, it might be is

Peace

Is a dream
Is a hope
Is a wish
In the future, it might be is

Peace
In a word
In a phrase
In a term
As a dream
As a hope
As a wish

Peace
Is for possibility
For the people
For the prayer
For the power of
Well,

Peace
I say
It might be still there
To be founded, to be invented
As P never stands for violence
And V never stands for peace
It might be still there
A single word we dream for the people
A phrase we hope in every prayer
A term we wish with the entire power we posses

“Peace, is for the whole world”

Karina Rinesti
Arcata High School
Arcata, California
We Hate You

We hate you War
You made our fathers and brothers
Go to war to battle
And leave us behind;
Praying for them.
We hate you War
You made our fathers and brothers
Train mornings till nights.
We hate you War
You made our fathers and brothers
Get killed, murdered,
And get shot.
We hate you War
You made our fathers and brothers
Suffer and get injured.
Why don’t you just disappear?
Our world is much better without you.
We hate you War
You made us miss
Our fathers and brothers
We put the blame on you
Because you bring us pain.

Bao Cheng
Eureka Senior High School
Eureka, California
A Special Place

Peaceful
Elevation
A special Place
Centered on Love
Everyone laughing and smiling

Michelle Lewis
Eureka High School
Eureka, California
Two Dinner Tables

I look across the dinner table
There is my brother
Intelligent, kind and annoying
On opposite sides are my parents
Wise, responsible and loving
I love my family

My friend looks across the dinner table
There is her brother
Intelligent, kind and annoying
On opposite sides are her parents
Wise, responsible and loving
She loves her family

Two dinner tables
Two happy families
Two rooms filled with laughter
But only one set of parents can be legally married
Injustice

Katerina Rocker Heppe
Arcata High School
Arcata, California
*** Second Honors Award Recipient ***
A Search for Peace

One day a man set off from home, to go far, far from home. He kissed his wife and dog goodbye, to search a man named Peace. He walked and walked 'til he went numb, asking all the way he went. He asked the hills and asked the trees, who lived before he did. They both told him to ask the sea, who stretched across the world. For all his sweat and all his pain no clue was his reward. Step by step, one at a time, the man was on his way back home. He passed the trees that lived with birds that sang throughout the day. The hills looked on, hushed, as mighty as they were, as the noisy creatures sang. They had to bear at the same time, the pain of carrying the giant trees that shielded them from rain and sun during the night and day. The man reached home, worn out and weak, but could not go to bed. He thought of the hills, the birds, and the trees and wondered how they endured together, being so different from one another. How the trees could stand the birds and how the hills could stand the trees were questions that lingered on his mind. The man stood awed and thrilled by this. It dawned on him he’d found the clue. The peace he searched had not been far, hardly had it been a stone’s throw away. Peace is when we stretch a hand to help someone in need. It is when we open up and accept people as they are. Peace is when we live in harmony with all our differences.

Agnes Badu-Mensah
North Coast Preparatory and Performing Arts Academy
Arcata, California

*** Honorable Mention Award Recipient ***
A Million Hearts in it Together

For those who want peace to be renewed,
they try to write, say tell, or do.
There are more clueless young people out there than ever before,
who are trying to stop the War.
Up in their minds they are racking those empty shelves,
but nowhere up there do they understand that one cannot change what
another isn’t willing to change within themselves.
One can be the best person, the most caring, concerning, giving, nice,
happy, selfless sort of a being,
but that still will not open their eyes into seeing
Anything.
Even the person who is labeled with
the best of the greatest amount of adjectives,
someone who wants to do “little things,”
will not change the hate, the disaster that the war brings.
A Smile? A Hug? A Simple thought? This is going to change the World!
I think not.
Maybe if every person could be the same,
then could every person help pursue change.
Only if every person in the world could care as much; could forgive,
forget, stop having envy, hatred, jealousy, revenge, and stop regretting,
then and only then can peace start settling.
Because peace is all around
in the sky, in the trees, in the ground.
Even in the people who are most devious
because even to those hearts peace is mischievous.
So to change the world is to change oneself.
To make this idea come alive would be a hard stealth.
One cannot change the world or stop the war alone,
a heart that wants change is what millions need to loan.
A heart cannot beat with only one vessel,
and just one lone boy against himself would not be much of a wrestle.
The world cannot concur peace,
Unless millions of caring hearts are willing to lease.
Are willing to care,
Are willing to share,
Are willing to join together in prayer,
Then could peace spread through the world everywhere.

Alysia Lovio
McKinleyville High School
McKinleyville, California
The Beast

Let’s count the raindrops.
One, two, three, four...

Let’s see the blood spill.
John, Steven, Mary, Elena...

Death,
As prevalent as the air we breathe.

So why?

Why must man slice the breast of man?
Legalized murder,
And for what?
Peace?

From what stable building is constructed from blood, flesh and tears?
To feed the beast that consumes our hearts,
And breaks those of our beloved.

Force feeding the Earth the blood of her creatures.
Is that no different than making a mother eat her child like a savage cannibal?
Is it okay if we call it, “cleansing our spirit?”
Just as we call war, “serving our country?”

Seeds of peace shall never be sown if palms tightly grasp a weapon.
Then what are we saving ourselves from?
Love,
And world peace.

Hands, palm to palm.
We shall be saved.

Courtney Feraru
Six Rivers Charter High School
Arcata, California
Peace Keep

Poison gas fills the lungs of little ones. Bullets flying through the air hitting innocent victims. Why the violence, the killings? Why can’t we just keep the peace? Love is stronger than hate, don’t underestimate! Break through the barrier of hatred just knock it to the ground let the peace flow in and fill this place. Don’t be influenced by hate. Keep the peace and don’t hate. Love life and stand free!

Megan McKenzie
Eureka High School
Eureka, California
The song he plays:

I hear him sing a soft lullaby,
Secretly I know it’s a twisted lie.
The song he coos is the song of hate,
The power he has we underestimate.
I see him hold the world in his hand,
Why he hates, we will never understand.
He has the power to ruin us all,
I hear him sing the song into the nightfall.
I no longer see in his eyes that familiar glow,
Why he hates on one will know.
The hate spreads like a deadly disease,
Till were hate free, we won’t live at ease.
He sits and sings so empty and sad,
It’s hard not to see the fire in his eyes and feel bad.
As we listen to the lyrics of his songs,
We know in our hearts that it is wrong.
For some the words rang true,
And the hate they felt grew.
They stopped and study each word,
And we witness as something bad just occurred.
We watch as the song is played hate is shared,
Most of us cover our ears because we’re scared.
If no one stopped to listen to the song of hate
Maybe the way the world is now wouldn’t be our fate.
We need to cover our ears from the music playing
Cause if you keep listening, we’ll keep paying.
So gather around and let’s protect,
Together we can lay the song of hate to rest.
He stings his final strings
And he smiles and no longer sings.

Marlea Rose
Eureka High School
Eureka, California
Peace

eyes
opening
blinding
in our vision

the thought of
change
the moments unfurling
in our hearts
different thoughts
than
the consuming
of our
world

defrozen
still

without a motion

eyes
closing
dreaming
in my soul

of
that
imagined
day.

Sierra Abrams
Alder Grove Charter School
Eureka, California
Peace

On the field
I’m at peace
Where we eat our meals where we feast
I stand in the grass meditating my thoughts floating
I think back, my mind has a flash
Running up the field so quickly so fast
I tilt my head to look at the clouds
I hear rain hitting the grass so loud
The thunder it roars with an overwhelming BOOM!
The game was starting very soon

Michael Millot
Eureka High School
Eureka, California
“untitled”

My Brothers,
and my friends.
When the field is full,
of the dead and those close to it,
when you lie unsolicitedly dying,
how can it be sweet
to die,
for a contrivance of mens’ minds,
A necessary evil.
Tangential vicissitudes
issue from the captain’s house,
like the cold steam
of an impassioned scream.
A scream for ordered chaos,
mazes and mazes,
stacked in neat columns.
The scream boils blood,
vision blurs red,
then blue,
then starry.
As the blue runs out,
into red,
away into the damp earth,
you lie alone,
face up in the field,
with nothing left to lose,
save everything.

Kevin Roney
North Coast Preparatory and
Performing Arts Academy
Arcata, California
Buried in the Ground

Wars cause too much suffering.
They inflict harm to the people who don’t carry the guns.
Wars are pointless.
Why can’t people be content with what they are given?
Power, land, resources, and the feeling of superiority are what wars are fought for.
Why do people refuse to recognize that wars do not need to happen?
Buried in the ground are millions of lives taken by the cruel malevolent hand of Death.
Death caused by war.
A child may visit his parent’s grave and weep.
The tyrants who start the wars don’t know the sorrow of those who have lost ones.
The tyrants that start the wars aren’t the ones sacrificing their own lives.
Why?
Why do they have others die for their own greed?
Why do they have the right to ensconce themselves in the treasures that they take?
Those who do not fight for their own cause are cowards.
What right do they have to reprimand those who do not fight?
Men, women, and children buried in the ground because of war,
Have lost their lives for nothing.
There was no reason for them to die.
A mother’s boy… killed.
She asks, “Why?”
The men in the shadows ignore her, too indulged in their comforts to give her a straight answer.
All those affected by war: men, women, and children,
are all buried in the ground.

Andrew “White Wolf” Morning Star
Eureka High School
Eureka, California
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Bug Press, Arcata, California

Endorsements

Peter LaVallee, Director, Youth Services Division
Redwood Community Action Agency

Liz Smith, MSW, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
To Whom It May Concern:

The Youth Service Bureau of Redwood Community Action Agency enthusiastically endorses the Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Contest.

The contest encourages local youth to reflect upon important issues facing our community and nation and to express their insights through poetry. We applaud any effort that encourages young people to think for themselves and to question standard assumptions. The process challenges myths and stereotypes and leads to a broader understanding of social justice.

Thank you for sponsoring this very worthwhile event.

Sincerely,

Peter LaVallee
Director – Youth Services Division
(707) 443-8322 Ext. 203
April 14, 2011

Veterans for Peace
Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Contest
P.O. Box 532
Bayside, CA 95524-0532

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your commitment to promoting peace locally and abroad and by including our young people by hosting a Peace Poetry Contest. On behalf of the Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods, I enthusiastically endorse this contest.

Encouraging youth to deal with issues of unrest and adversity and to be able to challenge these issues through artistic means is empowering and a reminder that as our future leaders, they have the power to effect monumental change.

Sincerely,

Liz Smith, MSW
Executive Director

---

Mission:
We empower youth to reach their full potential as responsible, caring, and productive citizens through professionally led programs and activities that are fun, positive and relevant in a safe, supportive and healthy environment.

Vision:
We envision healthy, empowered and engaged youth who appreciate and respect themselves, each other, their families, the community and the environment.

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Liz Smith, MSW

Tax ID 94-2184464
2nd Annual Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Contest

The Humboldt Bay Chapter of Veterans For Peace

www.vfp56.org

Invites Humboldt County High School Students to submit an original poem directly focusing on peace; the abolition of war, hate, or violence; or peace-making in our communities.

Peace even in times of unrest should be the goal of all human communities. This contest is an attempt to focus on peace in a very troubled world.

Poetry Format:
Submissions may be free style verse, rhymed or unrhymed poems of 50 lines or fewer. All work must be completely original, one entry per author, and, heretofore, unpublished.

Submission Requirements:
An entry shall consist of a single copy of the poem accompanied by a separate author's profile sheet.

Poem: Printed or typed on 8½- by 11-inch paper, with the title of the poem at the top of the page and page numbering if more than one sheet. Do not include author's name or any other identifying information on this sheet.

Author's Profile: On a separate sheet, provide: 1) title of poem; 2) author's name; 3) name of parent or guardian; 4) school affiliation or home schooled statement; 5) grade level; 6) name of teacher or home school coordinator; 7) contact telephone number (indicate whether personal, parent, guardian, or teacher); and 8) e-mail address.

Entries should be mailed to: Veterans For Peace, Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Contest, P. O. Box 532, Bayside, CA 95524-0532. Or, e-mailed to: nslomba@reninet.com in either Portable Document Format (.PDF) or Rich Text Format (.RTF).

Submission Deadline:
Entries must be received not later than 5 p.m., Monday, March 7, 2011

Entrants will receive a copy of the 2011 Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Anthology and be invited to present their poetry at the 2nd Annual Peace Poetry Celebration to be held Friday, May 6, 2011.

Cash prizes will be awarded to five written entries by an independent panel of local judges.
$200 for 1st Honors, $100 for 2nd Honors, $50 for 3rd Honors, and two $25 Honorable Mention

There will also be a $100 cash award for “Best Presentation” that, in the opinion of an independent judge, best conveys the meaning of the author’s written poem.

To qualify, the presentation must be made by the author at the Peace Poetry Celebration in May.

The Redwood Coast Peace Poetry Contest is sponsored by the Humboldt Bay Chapter of Veterans For Peace, Inc., the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Humboldt Chapter, and the Humboldt Unitarian Universalists Fellowship Social Action Committee. Submissions remain the property of the respective authors. Veterans For Peace Humboldt Bay Chapter 56 is granted an unrestricted license for reuse at its discretion.

Be on the look-out for the next Peace Poetry Contest in early 2012!
PEACE POETRY CONTEST CELEBRATION

FRIDAY MAY 6TH
HUMBOLDT UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS' FELLOWSHIP HALL
23 FELLOWSHIP WAY BAYSIDE, CALIFORNIA
7 P.M. TO 8 P.M.

VETERANS FOR PEACE
BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP
The 2010 Peace Poetry Celebration