

A Memo for Peace

this poem is dedicated to the women at the Greenham Peace Camp and to all those who live their lives in the struggle for peace and freedom November 1982

let us assume
that the basic assumptions
are wrong

the assumptions

that our leaders
and politicians
are right
and we are wrong

that those in power
know what's best
for us
that they have
our interests
at heart (what if
we assume
that they have
no hearts?)

that They are Good
and Grown Up and Wise
and we are Bad
Stupid Children
needing to be
put down
put right
and shown
How To Behave

let us assume that
that is not so
and let us
turn those assumptions
on their heads
til they rattle and groan
and beg for mercy
and for our
forgiveness

and let us remind ourselves
that we are many

who struggle
who cry out
who suffer in silence
even those who burned
to remind us
who march on marches
picket embassies
campaign and demonstrate
sign the petitions
hand out leaflets
write to newspapers
lobby MPs

who often go unheard

who join hands
who sing the songs
who write the words
who play the music
who surround the barricades
with clowns with children
who weave coloured ribbons
between the barbed wire
who offer flowers
to the guards
who light the candles
singing softly into night

who go to jail

we
who believe
in peace
and uphold the dignity
of human life
the sanctity
of our planet

who condemn
the killings
the rapes
the missiles
the poisons
the violations
the tortures
the cover-ups
the distortions
the pornography
the lies

the basic assumptions

we need to remind ourselves
that we cannot all
be wrong

we who live with
conscience
despite the discomforts

who raise our voices
despite the silencings

who gather strength
despite the pain

who challenge
the basic assumptions

survive

beneath
the warmongers'
icecold indifference
the politicians'
stonefaced rhetoric
the uniform armed alertness

we rattle
and keen

cry out
one voice

for peace.