Beat: Local

Launch of Birds without Sky - Poems from Exile by Malka Al-Haddad

A poems book

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USPA NEWS - On 21st February, more than 60 people gathered in Leicester Central Library for the Leicester Writers Showcase event in partnership with Leicester City Council to launch a new collection of poetry written by Malka Al-Haddad. It was a wonderful and moving event and celebration of the talent and contribution of a local asylum seeker and a collective of volunteers from Birmingham to Lincolnshire who collaboratively brought this publication to fruition. Special thanks were given to Richard Byrt who provided sensitive editing, Kate Mitchell for managing the project and George Sfrougaras for his donation of beautiful illustrations printed in this special collection.

Malka was able to thank all her supporters and provide a very moving context to a range of poems which the audience was privileged to listen to. Hearing Malka talk about her country, her personal journey and the inspiration for her poetry was a joy and delight, despite the horrors that we heard about.

Malka explained the context for writing her first poem "I´m Human". It was in response to a simple text question asking who are you and where are you from. She paced her small room for hours and her answers were expressed through this powerful poem.

As Carol Leeming who wrote the forward to her book said ""¦ some of the longer poems are able to simultaneously condemn, lament and exclaim angrily, and exult with stunning lyrical beauty. These poems therefore are like bittersweet love songs; the whole work the movement of melancholia, ire, joy of life and love, as they skillfully conjoin castigation of war, sad memories of loss, familial longing, geo-political rape of homeland, the fickle nature of a lover´s heart or statelessness "" a refugee´s fate."

Malka has generously gifted the proceeds of her poetry collection to three asylum seeker and refugee support organisations which are Leicester City of Sanctuary, baobab women´s project in Birmingham, and Greater Lincolnshire area of Sanctuary. Each of these organisations has supported Malka and as she said she wants to help her community and support humanitarian work.

The event was a marvellous celebration of humanitarian support, mutual inspiration, compassion, collaboration across different organisations and the very special talent, love and resilience of asylum seeker who is passionate about human rights and the power of art to communicate feeling.

All proceeds from the book will go directly to help asylum seekers and refugees in the East and West Midlands. You can buy your copy from Amazon.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com