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# Shifting Sands

## *Fact Sheet:*

## *Book Inspiration*



### **A Brief History of How this Book Came to Be**

Once upon a time, I was a progressive Jewish mama living in the U.S. suburbs, aware but only in the periphery of my mind of the escalating situation in Israel/Palestine. Then, in the spring of 2002, I got a call from my Israeli cousin asking me to translate his letter to the *UK Guardian* from Hebrew into English (as described in my essay “Loved is a Person”). From that request came my awakening to the realities of the Israel/Palestine conflict. Here was an IDF soldier telling me that the Israeli military I’d idolized as a symbol of Jewish strength and integrity was something else. My cousin and his fellow soldiers were not, as I’d always believed, only there to protect Israel’s security, but were occupying another people and suppressing their freedom through not just unethical but cruel, violent, and illegal means.

I was, at that time, a mother of babies and going through some very difficult times, so although I felt inspired to act, I didn’t know what I was in a position to actually *do*. It was not until seven years later that a second force pushed me toward action. Going into a summer seminar called “Help Your Kids Make Their Dreams Come True,” I expected to learn how to encourage my children. Instead, I was challenged to help them by setting an example, by being an adult who makes her own most heartfelt dreams come true. By the end of the seminar, I had realized that what I most wanted to do, apart from my family life, was create a book—not the kind of paid writing I was used to producing but a book that came from my heart.

I originally planned to create an anthology of adoption stories. I started doing research and wrote my own adoption essay but had not yet put out a call for submissions. One day while I was out walking, a voice in my head (one I like to ascribe to my father, who loved walking with me and died in 2003) said this: “Adoption can wait. This book must be about the Occupation.” And here, finally, was my opportunity to make a difference, to take action in the struggle for peace.

I put out a call for submissions and had some response. I chose four stories that I knew belonged in the collection. And this is how it stayed, despite my attempts to publicize the call for submissions, for several months. With three kids at home and chronic pain to deal with, I was overwhelmed by thoughts of starting over with a new call for submissions. Despite immense feelings of guilt, I decided to let the book go for a while. Several onths passed and, on a whim, I checked the email address for the book, wondering if anyone else sent an essay. I logged in and found that *my book had come to me*. I had enough great essays to combine into a coherent whole, very different, all perfect stories that just belonged together in this anthology.

Inspired, I contacted two peace activists myself (and a few more writers found me) and finally had the collection I’d envisioned: A chorus of women’s voices rising up and over the separation fence, among people’s broken lives, through a wall of fear and misunderstanding, into a song of peace and justice ready for the world to hear. I look forward to the day that chorus is made up of all people of conscience in the U.S., in Israel and Palestine and around the world.