



# Overcoming Speechlessness: A Poet Encounters the Horror in Rwanda, Eastern Congo, and Palestine/Israel

*Alice Walker*

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In 2006, Alice Walker, working with Women for Women International, visited Rwanda and the eastern Congo to witness the aftermath of the genocide in Kigali. Invited by Code Pink, an antiwar group working to end the Iraq War, Walker traveled to Palestine/Israel three years later to view the devastation on the Gaza Strip. Here is her testimony.

Bearing witness to the depravity and cruelty, she presents the stories of the individuals who crossed her path and shared their tales of suffering and courage. Part of what has happened to human beings over the last century, she believes, is that we have been rendered speechless by unusually barbaric behavior that devalues human life. We have no words to describe what we witness. Self-imposed silence has slowed our response to the plight of those who most need us, often women and children, but also men of conscience who resist evil but are outnumbered by those around them who have fallen victim to a belief in weapons, male or ethnic dominance, and greed.

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