

Karen Klien

Spinning Wheel

I.

A pair of round, wire-rimmed glasses
a white loincloth
a shawl woven from yarn you yourself spun
a single pallet
the simplest accoutrements
define a life
a choice
the power of restraint

II.

Hindu by birth, lawyer by trade
you find your *Satyagraha*
-devotion to the truth-
when the British in South Africa label you
Cape Coloured
your enormous ears
hear what authorities ignore
take the power of truth
to those in power

III.

No stranger to jail cells on two continents
your sandals scuff along endless dusty walks
the discipline of non-violence in the service of freedom
pleas for Muslim/Hindu unity
your only weapon your fasts-unto-death
to compel an end to their rioting
wrapped in the shawl, your skinny body
history's shadow

IV.

Your struggle made theirs
Nelson Mandela
like you, imprisoned
Amandia Ngawethu
Martin Luther King
like you, assassinated

We shall overcome
Yitzhak Rabin
like you, assassinated
by one of his own
Shalom Achshav

V.
Violent beings we live in violence
from our mouths to the mouths
of our guns
Spread your hand-woven shawl over us as protection,
Great Soul, because we cannot protect ourselves
from ourselves

After retiring from Brandeis University faculty, poet/dancer, **Karen Klein** founded *teXtmoVes*, a collaborative of poets/dancers/ choreographers who perform together and independently, most recently at Café@Artsat the Armory, Somerville. Her haiku have been published nationally, internationally, and anthologized. Her contemporary lyric poems have been printed in *The Cape Cod Poetry Review*, *Pudding Magazine*, *The Comstock Review*, *SLANT*, *The Somerville Times*, *Ibbetson Street #47*, online in *The Drunken Boat*, *Fusion Magazine*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, forthcoming in *Constellations*, read as *Sunday Poet on Boston Area Small Press and Poetry Scene*, *WCAI Poetry Sunday*, and Poet-to-Poet interview with Doug Holder, Somerville Cable TV. A member of Steeple Street Poets, she is compiling her first chapbook