5-1-2009

They Did Not Write: A Collaboration

David Allen
*University of the Pacific*

Margarita Amine
*University of the Pacific*

Amy Au
*University of the Pacific*

Arbie Jeke Campuspos
*University of the Pacific*

Tyler Chuang
*University of the Pacific*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope](https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope)

Part of the [Poetry Commons](https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope)

**Recommended Citation**

Allen, David; Amine, Margarita; Au, Amy; Campuspos, Arbie Jeke; and Chuang, Tyler (2009) "They Did Not Write: A Collaboration," *Calliope* Vol. 39, Article 3. Available at: [https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope/vol39/iss1/3](https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/calliope/vol39/iss1/3)

This Poem is brought to you for free and open access by the College of the Pacific Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Calliope* by an authorized editor of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.
They did not write because they ate too much.
They did not write because they had too many children.
Or because they had a field, or a street, or ten streets.
Or because someone threw rocks through their windows.
Then the son gambled his life away and they did not write because they couldn’t breathe outside Chinatown.

They did not write for the same reason I do not write.
Because winter was in the mind.
Because they were warriors and mothers.
Because they were busy conquering the Highlands.
Because they had left everything behind, most of all their words.
Because their pens spoke only Gaelic.
Because they were wrong and only winners write history.

And all that time the children kept crying for food, and the rent had to be paid and the textbooks had to be bought, and someone would have to clean their uniforms. And where was the time?

They did not write because they would write later.
They did not write because no one would read them.

Now the books are burning, the houses are burning, the trees, fields, friends, and families do not write because they are in prison, and what room is there in prison to compose and how many voices are there, crying?

Oh, you people of the nation.
Oh, you people under the black umbrella.
It seems a gloom has come, a gloom, fully mysterious, but yet familiar. And how many voices are singing and how many children are crying, mothers and sisters, mirrors of past and present cycling through time?

They said they never gave it a thought.
They said they were afraid to take the leap, frozen by fear of critique.
Their lives remained a dream, a vision seen through a window, a shade, a spirit, a landscape streaming past. All their words became a pristine silence. This is why they did not write.

What use is paper, these useless scratchings? They were ashamed of misspelling their own names.

This is why they did not write: Because they did not know how. Because they did not know how. Because they had not been taught. Because they were cooking. Because they were eating. Because they were told it was no good.
Because they were afraid.
Because they didn’t dare.

They did not write because it was not right.
They thought it wasn’t right and so they did not write.

But if they had been able to write,

this is what they would’ve written:

*It is our God-forsaken right.*

©

Written collaboratively by Professor Camille Norton’s Honors Creativity and Knowledge Sophomore Seminar, Fall 2008, University of the Pacific

*Authors:* David Allen, Margarita Amine, Amy Au, Arbie Jeke Campuspos, Tyler Chuang, Catherine Fung, Gloria Gunn, Michelle Kim, Doo Lim, and Courtney Mims