

OCTOGENARIAN ON FIRE, 2018

- *Vilma Ginzberg*

Watching the world from here... as me:

HOPE

hope is those grandmothers who an hour ago
each donned their black slacks and black tops
to stand together on the corner
something they've done at noon every Friday for the last ten years joining other
women in black across the country across the seas across all boundaries
in that grief that silent blade of protest
against their sons' seduction into the glories of war

hope is the loan-battered college senior and the corporate-battered retired senior
singing together we shall overcome
in the madison rotunda
before being arrested for disturbing the peace they bring
singing tall into their captors' faces

hope is the music clanged out by the unwashed the untaught
who never heard of Mozart
but who beat out their dreams on the garbage can lids
of their lost and listless tenement neighborhoods
hanging rhythm on the clotheslines
hip-hop of a new journey out of the cracked cement

hope is the gathering of elding beatniks and limping Viet vets
and tattooed gen-X-ers and loud lipsticked goths in a coffee house
reading poems of protest peace and solidarity
to the beat of a bass viol's plaintive heart

hope is a Masai daughter on her knees
planting sprouts in the dusty clay of a savannah plain
or the soft earth of a white house garden

teaching the children that love sits on the tongue of the nourished

hope sprouts from the fingers of anyone who ever plants a tree

hope may sleep out of reach for a while but never dies
you may kiss it awake any time