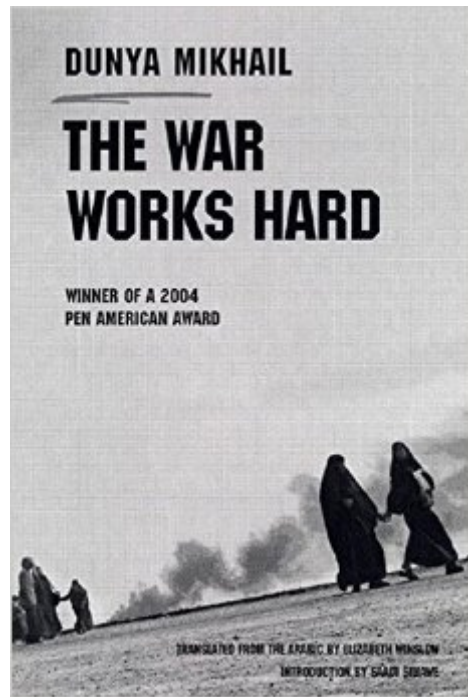


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# The War Works Hard



## Synopsis

Mikhailâ™s poetic vision transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries with liberating compassion. Revolutionary poetry by an exiled Iraqi woman. Winner of a 2004 PEN Translation Fund Award. "Yesterday I lost a country," Dunya Mikhail writes in *The War Works Hard*, a revolutionary work by an exiled Iraqi poet first to appear in English. Amidst the ongoing atrocities in Iraq, here is an important new voice that rescues the human spirit from the ruins, unmasking the official glorification of war with telegraphic lexical austerity. Embracing literary traditions from ancient Mesopotamian mythology to Biblical and Qur'anic parables to Western modernism, Mikhail's poetic vision transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries with liberating compassion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is full of eloquent and very forceful poems dealing with life in Iraq and some of its heart wrenching experiences during the last 20 years. Many of these poems have appeared in Arabic in a book with the same title (In Arabic, \*Al-harb taamal bijidd\*) published by Al-Mada P.C., Damascus, Syria. The translation into English by Elizabeth Winslow is excellent and conveys a lot of the simplicity and force of the original poems. What I admire most in Dunya Mikhail's poetry is her ability to take simple words and turn them into beautiful poems that, alternately, delight, move, surprise, and even baffle her readers. This simplicity of words is more apparent in Arabic than in English. Typical of her poetry and its unexpected effect on the reader is "The Jewel," a poem in which she compares the collapse of a bridge during the 1991 American bombing of Baghdad to the dropping

of a jewel by the lady on the Titanic. "It no longer stretches across the river. / It is not in the city, / not on the map. / The bridge that was . . . / The bridge that we were . . . /The Pontoon bridge / we crossed every day . . . / Dropped by the war into the river / just like the blue jewel / that lady dropped / off the side of the Titanic."In another poem she writes, "Yesterday I lost a country. / I was in a hurry, / and didn't notice when it fell from me / like a broken branch from a forgetful tree. / Please, if anyone passes by / and stumbles across it, / perhaps in a suitcase / open to the sky, / or engraved on a rock / like a gaping wound, / ... / If anyone stumbles across it, / return it to me please. / Please return it, sir. / Please return it, madam. / It is my country . . . / I was in a hurry / when I lost it yesterday.

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