

### The War Works Hard [Paperback]

[Dunya Mikhail](#) (Author), [Saadi S. Simawe](#) (Author), [Elizabeth Winslow](#) (Author)

(4 customer reviews)

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### Editorial Reviews

#### From Publishers Weekly

"What good luck!/ She has found his bones." So begins a litany of horrors from an Iraqi poet who witnessed Saddam's regime's atrocities firsthand. Mikhail, 40, works in Arabic, Chaldean and English, and had to flee Iraq in the years just before the current war; after a stint in Jordan, she now lives in Michigan, where the poems in the first section here were composed over the past few years. They are forceful and direct, with ironies that ring through their blunt admonishments: "Please don't ask me, America./ I don't remember their names/ or their birthplaces./ People are grass—/ they grow everywhere, America." In some, the speaker imagines life in wartime Iraq or writes in one of its many voices, including mythic ones ("I am Inanna," begins one in the Sumerian love goddess' voice, "[a]nd this is my city"). In others, she channels grief or anger, as in a bitter and beautiful set of "Non-Military Statements." The book's other two sections contain poems from the earlier collections *Almost Music* (1997) and *The Psalms of Absence* (1993) respectively; their coverage of the Gulf War makes clear just how much, for Iraqis, war has been a nightmarish way of life, with the U.S. playing a recurrent role. Stark and poignant, Mikhail's poems give voice to an often buried, glossed-over or spun grief. (Apr.)

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#### Review

A timely book. -- *Boston Review*, Susan Barba

An urgent book...slaps her readers awake. -- *Matthew Rothschild, The Progressive*

Stark and poignant, Mikhail's poems give voice to an often buried, glossed-over or spun grief. -- *Publishers Weekly, 18 April 2005*

This volume exhibits a new, and unfamiliar, voice from the Middle Eastern world. -- *Confrontation*

#### About the Author

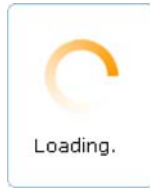
**Dunya Mikhail**, born in 1965, speaks and writes in Arabic, Chaldean, and English. She worked as Literary Editor for *The Baghdad Observer*. Facing increasing threats and harassment from the Iraqi authorities for her writing, she fled first to Jordan, then to the United States where she currently lives in Sterling Heights, Michigan. In 2001, she was awarded the U.N. Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing. She has published four collections of poetry in Arabic, and one lyrical, multi-genre text, *The Diary of a Wave Outside the Sea*.

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