

**Priya Sarukkai Chabria**

**War Poems from Babylon and Persia, 2006**

**Fatima, mother of Sohrab, says:**

I heard the news and rushed  
to my son.

His arm lay on the street  
the fingers curled.

His arm lay on the street  
the fingers curled  
that had touched my breast  
that had beat his brothers  
that had loved his wife  
that had held his child.

I carried his arm  
as a flagpole  
through the wailing  
streets though his blood dried on me  
and my body dried to the bone.

I waved his arm.  
I asked for my son.

The soldiers pushed  
me back into the wall of wailing.  
I clutched his arm  
though his fingers had clenched  
into a fist of stone.

Listen:

on our streets that are littered with fists  
and where mothers turn to stone,  
our curses become wishes  
that will release  
into your unborn children.  
Your fetuses will squirt out of wombs as pebbles —  
that are not smooth, but pitted.  
Remember this.