

From Ward to Warfront: The Poetry of a Nurse-Turned- Revolutionary Health Leader in Upper Myanmar (Ah Nyar)

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Abstract

This study analyzes the poetry of a nurse from Upper Myanmar who, after joining the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), became a frontline health leader and poet. It investigates how her verses document the transformation from clinical care to revolutionary action, using personal testimony to illuminate broader societal trauma. The research asks: How does this poetry reconceptualize care and resistance in a conflict zone? And what role does this nurse's poetry play in personal and communal resilience? Employing literary and thematic analysis specifically of poems written by this individual nurse (published in revolutionary magazines, journals, and bulletins), the study finds that her work weaponizes medical metaphors to diagnose national illness, reframes gendered care roles as acts of political defiance, and creates a vital emotional archive. This vernacular poetry functions as both a form of mental health preservation and a safeguarded civic space. The paper argues for recognizing such grassroots cultural production as essential for understanding gendered experiences, psychological survival, and human rights advocacy in Myanmar's post-coup reality, recommending its integration into holistic post-conflict recovery frameworks.