

THE VEIL, MY BODY

NOR FARIDAH ABDUL MANAF

It's just a piece of cloth
It rocks the world
It shapes a civilisation
A civilisation misread

It's trapping, says the untutored
It's oppressing, echoes the unlearned

The veil is my body
The veil is also my mind
The veil defines my cultural identity
The veil is who I am

Your slurs and instructions
That I rip it off my head
Is a rape of my body
An invasion of my land

It's just a piece of cloth
But after Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Maluku, Kosovo
This is all I have.

Author Note

Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf is a Malaysian Muslim woman who has recently (2006) released a book of poetry called *The Art of Naming: A Muslim Woman's Journey*. Her poem, "My Veil, My Body" was first published by Seal Press in the book *Voices of Resistance: Muslim Women on War, Faith & Sexuality* (2006) and edited by Sarah Husain.