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Poetry: The Bananas that Move North

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ing unnecessarily in the process of international dialogue.

To the contrary, the human rights movement will not reach its potential until abuses end and all governments fully observe, and not merely endorse, the internationally-adopted human rights standards. The fact that human rights is on the agenda of inter-governmental discussions is a clear indication that human rights abuse continues. Political imprisonment, torture and extra-judicial executions continue in many countries. The human rights movement must not be lulled into passivity simply because the issue of human rights has entered the dialogue among nations. Human rights must play a central role in inter-governmental discussions. If the human rights movement assumes a passive stance, governments will address the human rights issue in an ideological context and weaken the protection of human rights everywhere. The potential and the goal of the human rights movement is to put an end to all human rights abuse. The achievement of that potential requires aggressive activism.

Amnesty International's 25th anniversary is a milestone that represents the sustained efforts of hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world to abolish the abuse of human rights. We celebrate this moral commitment and we rejoice in the recognition of lives saved and torture stopped. However, we also acknowledge the continuing struggle. We know of the willingness of many governments to subjugate human rights to political expediency, to imprison, torture, and kill ordinary citizens for the achievement of political goals. Amnesty International, as part of the larger human rights movement, reaches out to all corners of the world, enlisting the assistance of ordinary citizens. Human rights activism is expanding and growing, and much of this growth occurs in abusive societies. The movement will continue to grow as greater numbers of ordinary citizens recall the "forgotten prisoners" and demand their release.

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The Bananas That Move North

The Bananas that move north
in the holds of the ships of United Brands
are green and tight as new wood.
They curl like fat fingers
in the cold bellies of the ships.

The fingers of the bananas,
slipping through the Stream
like the dreaming remains of hands,
remember what we do not care to know:
one day they took the place of human cargo
in the ships of the captains
of the North.

The bananas that move north
in the ships of United Brands
clutch their memories:
bananas rotting on the quays
in the harbor of New Orleans,
the sniff of profit to be made.

They remember an exiled president
returning to Honduras with "Machine Gun" Molony,
and the concessions...
the country owned by Cuyamel,
parent of United Fruit,
parent of United Brands.

The bananas of the Republics
move north with their long memories.
Spiders come slowly awake
in the Norte Americano markets.
Find places to hide.
Hide in the drapes.
Wait.

W. F. Bolton

Winston Bolton is a free lance writer whose poetry has appeared in *Folio* and in college literary magazines. His technical writing assignments include NASA's Apollo program, a radiation waste disposal project for the Pilgrim I power station, and nuclear power plant siting for New York State. He has a B.A. in English from Northeastern University and is currently doing graduate study at Bridgewater State College.