

IN THE LAND WITHOUT HATS

Coming this summer from Plain View Press

In the Land without Hats is a stirring and inspiring book by Julie Mughal which explores the difficulties faced by widows in the developing world and their courage in the face of adversity.

Excerpt from *In the Land without Hats*:

My life is clearly delineated – life before Swissair 111 crashed into the Atlantic and life after. For many months following Pascal’s death, I didn’t see a future but struggled to survive each hour, day and week. The lost promise of a future with Pascal was too painful to accept and the memories of our happy past were too heartbreaking to allow myself to remember.

The women all told me that their husbands were safe in “the land without hats.”

In the years that followed, my life moved in fits and starts - long nights of desperately searching for something, anything, that Pascal had left behind for me - a final note, an unwrapped present, a sign. There was also the restless wandering, back and forth between New York and Geneva and to the places where my job took me - Guatemala City, Manila, Katmandu, Ho Chi Minh - anywhere I could go to escape. Yet, somehow, my life continued. It was somewhere between Nairobi and Port- au-Prince that I decided to speak with other widows and to write down what they told me.

In the Land without Hats is a collection of these stories. On this journey, I’ve spoken with many exceptional women – widows who face a daily struggle to survive, keep their families together and their children fed, clothed and educated.

In 2001 it was – and still is – a dangerous time in Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier Province. At the height of the Afghan refugee crisis, I remember meeting a widow outside a child vaccination center. I never knew her name and she only agreed to speak with me out of public view. I recall so clearly the way her fearful eyes stared at me through the webbing of her pale blue *burqa*. Despite her covering, I could tell that she was very young. She had a newborn in her arms. I remember seeing her eyes overflow with tears as she asked what kind of life her child would have, an Afghan widow’s daughter.

To this day, this is one of the most haunting images I carry with me. I had no acceptable answer - it would be a life of hardship and struggle. It is my hope that this book will help us to find a better answer to the question asked to me so many years ago and to explore how we can make a difference.

Please contact Julie Mughal at jmughal@live.com for information on the book or to place an advanced order.