

"Dear unfortunate friends who have lost your homes..."

Dacia Maraini (April 15, 2009)



The famous Italian writer addresses a letter to her unfortunate Abruzzese fellows. i-Italy has translated the text for its readers. Hers are words filled with deep sadness but also great hope. She also mentions her important upcoming project: the opening of camp libraries for the displaced people in the Region

(by L.A.S.)

First a few words to let you know how I knew about Dacia Maraini's letter.

As happens to so many here in America, these days my thoughts are frequently in Abruzzo. And



then my eyes, as well as my ears go in search of news. For the smells, it is enough to recall the memories of those streets that no longer exist and the scent of fireplaces lit in winter.

Television remains an important way to stay informed and to learn, but today it is not always the most immediate. News of a letter written by the great Italian writer Dacia Mariani addressed to the people of Abruzzo reached me through the Internet, even though it was broadcast on television by [RAI 1](#). [2]

I looked for her, and in fact I found her as I looked online on [Unità's website](#) [3]. I contacted her right away, and she responded with her usual willingness to help.

"Translate it? Sure, [RAI](#) [4] has no rights to it. I did it free of charge, to document the participation of those who love this land. It was also to announce that I am collecting books to create libraries for displaced people in camps."

Dacia Maraini is intimately linked to Abruzzo, as a woman, an intellectual, and as an Italian of the world. For many years, she lived in both Pescasseroli (Abruzzo) and Rome. One of her recent novels, ['Colomba' \(Rizzoli\)](#) [5], is set in Abruzzo.

We sought her out to talk about the book collection she is organizing for those people displaced by the earthquake and currently living in camps. The idea moved us a great deal. The future of Abruzzo lies not only in the reconstruction of buildings, but there is a culture that also needs to be preserved through reading literature. This is where the real transition to the future lies for new generations.



Dear unfortunate friends,

who have lost your homes, belongings, property, and optimism.

"Mountains bent before your grief," wrote Anna Akhmatova. Over the past few days, we have all admired the dignity and grace with which you have faced this tragedy. You have not lost heart. You have shown solidarity and adapted to each new difficulty with courage. For this, I thank you. You are setting a invaluable example for a country that all too-often is lost in dreams of self-sufficiency, of intolerance towards those who suffer and struggle to get by.

I know that others are providing for your immediate needs. That is why I thought to help you by collecting books to build libraries in the area, which could bring some small joy to those eyes that have seen so much destruction.

A few words of condolence for those you have lost, those who certainly did not deserve to be so cruelly separated from your city and your families. Even though, as popular legends suggest, it is comforting to think that their gentle souls are still here among these forests and rivers to observe your pain with kind and patient eyes.

For those who have died and instead should be alive today, I beg you in the future: Do not let others act on your behalf! Do not, I pray, put your trust in those who only think of their own interests. Have faith in yourselves and in your many abilities!

Honorary citizen of Gioia dei Marsi,

Dacia Maraini

(Translated by Giulia Prestia)

Cari sfortunati amici

che avete perso la casa, gli affetti, le proprietà, la spensieratezza. "Davanti alla vostra pena s'incurvano i monti", scriveva Anna Achmatova. Tutti ammirano in questi giorni la dignità e il pudore con cui affrontate la disgrazia. Voi non vi perdetevi d'animo. State praticando la solidarietà e vi adeguate con coraggio alle nuove difficoltà. Di questo vi ringrazio. Perché date un esempio prezioso a un paese troppo spesso perso dietro a sogni di autosufficienza, di intolleranza verso chi soffre e chi arranca.

So che qualcun altro sta provvedendo alle vostre necessità primarie. Per questo ho pensato di potervi aiutare raccogliendo libri per costruire delle biblioteche di campo che possano dare qualche piccola gioia ai vostri occhi che hanno visto troppa distruzione.

Solo due parole di saluto ai vostri morti, che certamente non hanno meritato di essere separati così drasticamente dalla vostra città e dalle vostre famiglie. Anche se, come suggeriscono alcune leggende popolari, è bello pensare che le loro anime gentili siano ancora qui fra questi boschi e questi fiumi, a osservare con occhi dolci e pazienti il vostro dolore.



Per quei morti che forse avrebbero potuto oggi essere vivi vi prego, in futuro: non lasciate che gli altri agiscano per conto vostro! Non affidatevi, vi prego, nelle mani di chi pensa solo al proprio tornaconto.

Abbiate fiducia in voi e nelle vostre capacità che sono tante!

La cittadina onoraria di Gioia dei Marsi

Dacia Maraini

Cover photo: 'La torre dei libri' by [bluestardrop](#) [6], from Flickr

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[3] <http://www.unita.it>

[4] <http://www.rai.it>

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