

Based on Wars Reported

(for Sadia Arman)

“This way to glory... This way to the grave.”
- From A German War Primer by Bertolt Brecht

1. Waiting for a Good Harvest

On the threshold of another century coming,
we think this century has planted more corpses
than in any as far back as we remember.

And we confess we have had the right
amount of flesh and bones - the best
with no side affects to Earth, and of blood
(Oh, you cannot forget blood welling up
from every hole bullets have ever made!) ,
if not rain from mushroom clouds up high.
Every government, be it in Europe or Asia,
we think, should fix for the ignorant this slogan:
'no more buying expensive chemicals.'

So, we farmers of this blessed century feel
our greed for good crops is going to be met soon -
for you know Earth's more fertile every year;
we can hope the Almighty won't be so stingy
as to bestow upon us a good harvest.

2. Scapegoats and the Lambs

Picasso, how do you come across this feeling:
this world is a big charnel house and Guernica
is one single work synonymous with life?

On Christ's pasture, lambs are slaughtered,
and the scapegoats that we are - sacrificed
in the name of the Lord of the Wars.

How long should we relish a pervert's joy -
daily to be alive to see horrors multiply
all afloat on the waves of bombardment?

Oh, no cleansing at the cost of green for red!

3. Lord of the Wars, Look

Lord of Wars, who dares have a suspicion
about your unusual talent for tricks!
you and the whole pack of your hounds think:

blood is a wonderful dye for the human skin,
and guns the brushes artists like you use
on the world's longest canvas for centuries.

But freaks like us wonder who it is at times
dumping a cucumber straight up your ass;
for nothing's all that terrific for you,

not even horrific to see bullets forever stop
one's hand reaching out for a little butterfly,
from one of the trenches on the western front,

not even the tots - certainly not yours -
all tiny and fresh as dew-moistened cabbages
and now crusty with blood in a blast.

Broken-winged sparrows pining for spring,
we only read praises even when we watch out
for the skeletons creaking under your boots.

No, I ain't have no interest in your death, rather
how you in childhood ran through meadows -
ah, the shoots undulating as green waves

against Constable's greenline on the horizon
or drowned your ankles in pebbles of a fountain
or how you in youth first kissed a maiden;

for you brute, too, just breathe as we all do.

The Green Flutterings at Arannyak

(for Muni Auntie, Shohail Uncle and Bachchu Uncle)

1.

At Arannyak, the whitest bungalow by the greenest lake,
I see every mind open up like petals of a flower
and the long-lost fragrance floods again our senses.

But we poor city-dwellers drone like machines;
it's once again we stand - plagued by doubts,
and kind of startled by a sudden feel of fears

running through every vein like incorrigible blood.

2.

But something more often than never pulls us
to places where we learn about life's archaeology,
and let out the psyche in the blessed shower.

Oh, how rarely we do come to breathe free at last,
and to see some wonders uncoil with promises
like nature could still be a glory for all our life!

Yes, it heals with care the hurts in the heart.

3.

In the midst of this forest denser than thick hair
on a teen's head, I walk alone, listening to a silence
kind of whizzing fast like a subtle message

through the embracing leaves I see on branches;
never do I feel in the least ashamed every time
I wonder who puts such green on every leaf

and if this greenery can brush away the grey in me.

The sunshine falls on every leaf and turns green,
and the shrubs cluster as if to say: united we stand,
and the wind blows like a mother's kisses on her child.

Yes, I feel: whatever may come, I don't even care,
for I have known for sure a difference widening
between the dry rustling and the green fluttering.

Oh, no more talk to me of cold embers but emeralds.

Sofiul Azam was born in Sherpur District, Bangladesh, in 1981. He has earned Honours and Masters in English Literature from Rajshahi University. He has a book of poems titled *Impasse*, which was published from Pathak Shamabesh, Dhaka in 2003. His poems have appeared in literary journals across the world including *Poetry Magazine*, *Lowe Prose & Poetics*, *Both Sides Now*, *The Journal of Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry*, *Postcolonial Text*, *Trillium Literary Journal*, *Red River Review*, *Debris Magazine*, *The Flash Review*, *Apollo's Lyre*, etc and some of them are anthologized as well.

Moreover, he is now working on *In Love with a Gorgon*, his second collection of poems. He also writes short fiction. Of late, he is working on a long story, *Ashes of the Cremated Dead* for his first book of short stories. He loves to write creative non-fiction as well; his first non-fictional prose is *A Double-born Kid's Tale*, a work in progress. His research interests include post-colonial theories with reference to cultural politics and emancipatory aesthetics in the domain of post-colonial literatures across the globe, and he is writing *Not Afraid of Double Rejections: Notes on a Cultural Translation in Post-colonial Literatures*.

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