



ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



A poem for the mother of baby Jesus

A BOUQUET OF POEMS

1

Your Heart will be pierced with a Sword

Beneath the cross,
On which a thirty-three-year-old
Is nailed to and dying,
His mother stands,
Her body and soul
Grasping the meaning of pain.

'Your heart will be pierced
with a sword', it was said.
She hears her son's words:
'My kingdom is not of this world'.
He had not come to be
The king of a pleasure-seeking world.

The sword that pierced her soul
Tells of a reality beyond pleasure:
A king born in an animal shed
And now killed like a criminal;
No worldly idea of power,
Wealth, or pleasure.

Indeed, a contradiction,
As the old prophet said.
Only a heart pierced with a sword
Could understand and grasp
The inseparable bond
Between pain and love.

2

The Refugee

The challenge of a mother
To bring up her baby
In a world ruled
By a tyrant
Where his fears shape
The landscape, minds and souls.
A mother is woken at midnight
To take her child and to flee,
To escape the babykiller's agents

How easily abnormal becomes
The new normal
Domestic security turns into
Life in exile where anonymity
Becomes a protective fence.
Among the poor families
This young family takes refuge.

Their baby grows with other babies, smiling, crying
and playing
Parents join hard-working folk
To make a living

With simplicity everywhere
No privilege anywhere
Daily life is shared

With men, women and children
Their friends in a foreign land
Protecting God's own son

3

The Missing Child

Mother knew her son,
Entering to his teenage years,
Was perfect love,
The most dangerous mission.
Many will smell his blood
And many an ambush
and trap was awaiting.

So, the fear when he is missing
The mother and the father
Walk for miles all the way back
Looking for the twelve- year-old,
Making inquiries,
Recalling the long years in exile.

Reaching the temple, they gaze
At the young boy arguing with
With the masters of logic
And the text,
clever in the cruelties,
Killers of love with sword like world,

The boy is confident and sharp
Compounding the priests
They pretend amazement.
Poison within their minds,
Begin to grow;
The snake prepares for the attack.

Then the conversation,
Mother asks son why
Son knows their anxiety
Replies, I am engaged in
My father's business
Love must confront evil
That is his father's business

4

No Privileged Woman

No privileged lady
She stands among the ordinary folk
As her son
Is made a spectacle of
To exhibit the power and might,
The power of Rome
And the cold reasoning of the clerics.
Soldiers trained in the schools
Of terror and cynicism
And clerical manipulators of mobs
Forced a cross and crown of thorns
Combining torture and mocking
Staging a street drama
For evil eye to feed the brains
Of the powerful with a sense of triumph

There the mother follows
His every step, every breath
Mind, heart, body and soul
All with him all the way
Unmoved by terror and humiliation
She is there as he falls
As he gets up and walks
As he falls again
As he is lashed and jeered
Feeling his every breath
Seeing how he bleeds and sweats
She walks with him
In body and the spirit.
Knowing his kingdom
Is not of this world

5

Crucifixion - History Carries This Unease

Homo sapiens have killed
Their God.

They stand beneath the cross,
Doubting the finality
Of their achievement.

Their crime troubles them.

A detective inside them reminds them:

All crimes can be uncovered.

History carries this unease;

The guilty, unable to mourn,
Suffocate and complicate all things.

The killer's psyche is born and reborn

Again and again.

Now, the deed is done.

They fear the body that remains.

Customs dictates the mother's prerogatives

Over the dead and the wounded.

Mother receives her son's wounded body
with the same tenderness with which she once held
the newborn babe.

Here maternity confronts

All types of modernity,

And her gaze reminds us

that the killing was no victory
and is devoid of finality.

6

On Impermanence and Permanence

Guilty judge, eager to ease his soul,

Washes his hands

Of the blood of God.

As if all the waters of the seas and rivers

Could wash clean his mind.

The clerics, who hid behind mobs

Crying for his blood,

Reconstruct their pious faces

Knowing an incurable inner spilt,

Inescapable and everlasting.

Soldiers torment their families

As executioners always do

Those loved ones,

Unmoved by terror,

Attend to last decencies

Paid to the condemned one

With dignity, defiance and decorum.

He had taught them

Of the impermanence of power and hate

And the permanence of love.

Basil Fernando