

A Question.

My African name is Essalu
which means nothing to you
I live near Freetown place,
war has been my whole life
I don't know what peace is,
one day the rebels came here
and took us to their camp
they made me kneel down and
put my arms on the ground,
they cut my hands clean off
with the blade of an old axe,
I was in so much blind terror
I didn't really feel the pain
but afterwards the agonies
caused me to faint away,
a friend got me to hospital
when the fighting died down,
the hungry dogs ate my hands,
afterwards the stumps healed
and they gave me a little strap
so that now I can feed myself,
ghost-hand pain is still with me,
I can never ever understand
why people are so cruel.

Mother And Child.

It was a front page article
in a community newspaper
not big time as papers go
but the photo was so arresting
a mother and her daughter,
the daughter was paralysed
an unfortunate birth had left her
needing a totality of close care
in every single facet of living,
forty years of a total caring
has absorbed the mother's life
an old lady now at seventy eight
and her greatest concern was
who will care when I have gone!
the thought pressed night and day
it agonised her every moment,
sure they will put her somewhere
but she has known a mother's love
a totality of endless close caring,
nothing can replace that love
a night and day life of total giving,
the mother knowing she has failed
the few years given yet to live
will haunt her with this failing,
she has lived a long life of agony
and is facing a death of shame.

Thoughts For The Morrow.

When we lay aside our life and die
will our passing be just the ending
of all that we know and stand for
as an apology for our having been
or else a handing-on of all that was
cleansed and refined into a rebirth?
desiring the latter we cannot dream
the dimmed dreams of past grandeurs
achieving nothing in the future fight,
get down to the bedrock message
defeating the scourge of inequality
shouting the message of liberation
revealed in a defiant Jesus-death
no compromise in sleight of hand
revised devotions out of past ages
rather, small groups to read and live
his message still there in Testament
where evil is confronted by a love
the down-trodden lifted by that news
work is there in this so little time
then die fighting always for the cause
strengthening a future for Jesus's name.

Searching.

The Divine is not ever constrained
within the solemnity of churches
nor within the rarity of pure ether
rather it is captured within the human
no matter the banality of interactions,
the loveliness of humans one to the other
divine unity of people in pure protesting
or divinity of a person lifting another
out of the poverty of long lost hope
children play in a happiness of beyond
for nothing in the adult is comparable
the adult knowledge is beyond fantasy,
Divinity is born out of a total trusting
of a child ignorant of all knowing.

Pain And Sleep Story.

I have had an extremely hectic day
I left home at seven o clock this morning
getting back at six p m this evening
sitting down at my home-friendly desk
and sleeping soundly for a whole two hours,
Big deal! I hear you exclaim in ridicule
but just let me hasten to add to this
that it was my best uncontrolled sleep
for three persistent months of solid pain,
a persistency of mad devil-prodding pain.
I'm not quite as young as I used to be
and have had this consistant run of pain,
Ah pain, wherein is your smug victory!
what a wild persistent bed-fellow you are
not an agonizing screaming pressure pain
but just an ongoing prodding task-master
that scoffs at increased doses of pain-killer
as so many grains of sand on life's shore
just pitch-forking me into the macabre play
of life endured under the power of a demon
who follows one around in leering pay-back
until yesterday when the miracle occurred
and you slithered away you mad wild beast
leaving me here in this incredible confusion
in a rare world of trusting soft painlessness
and so after this more than hectic day
I awake, gathering my wits to the present now
of a rare thanksgiving and new playfulness.

Silence.

Blessed be the God of silence
quietness of the quiet time,
it is not to be thus avoided
but there is that tendency
to run to the market place
to seek the solace of noise
we fear to be close to silence
or to be too much alone
for there we are close to self
too close into the deep self
where it is easier not to go
for fear of reaching into
that which is not understood,
so we hang in with the tumult
we try to escape from self
of the silence pressing ever in
fearing intimacy of knowing
the key to fear is not- knowing
we fear because we sinned
not knowing the liberation
of the quiet God of love,
time comes when we will reach
for the true silence naturally.

Clowns

A group of top international clowns
visited a childrens hospital in Kosova
and in those old dark fetid buildings
children were seen to smile and laugh
for the first time in many slow months
many of them have respiratory problems
and other war induced serious illnesses
many of them will die from a simple lack
of basic medications and equipment
and so clowns entered this clownish hell
where sick children lie victims of war,
maybe a team of nurses was more urgent
clowns came as a zany contradiction
attempting to break through the inertia
that pervades this war-torn country
full of sick children who cannot laugh.

**Floods.
(Good Friday 2002.)**

Good Friday again
and the wide world
is as ever awash
in a sea of blood,
a shortage of water
is a world problem
but the flow of blood
an unending flood
as cheap as the dirt
yet dirt is moistened
in unending floods
men , women angered
over the totalities
of endless inequalities
that flood the earth
so let us now offer
on this sad quiet day
our blood and water
our tears and agonies
in this place of blood
at the foot of a cross.
bleeding for all of us.

Current Affairs.

Sharon is all trapped within
the tough skin of an old soldier
and Arafat is likewise trapped
trapped in the skin of a terrorist
because that is just what they are
or they have so fated to become
and also Israel and Palestine
are likewise trapped deep within
agonies of their own constructions
so that they can only be helped
by people in this world outside
we need to be bombarding them
with prayers , letters and support
in the form of food and medication
to help them to learn and know
that they are of this whole world
and not creatures of another planet,
possibilities for peace are so real
but only if they can let old hatreds die,
their tiny strip of earth must become
sufficient for those twin odd entities
and only we on the outside world
can help the young in both camps
to see the futility of all the killings
knowing the future to be different.

Indofood.

I bought a packet of
rich cream biscuits
at the Supa-Valu store
in East Victoria Park,
the same cream biscuits
as manufactured by
Arnotts conglomerate
or any other big firm
the only difference being
the cost was sixty seven cents
how could such a product
be made, packaged and sold
at this ridiculous price?
then out of curiosity
I read the packeted print
made in Purwakarta Indonesia.
with the import agents name
printed on a separate sticker
like some badge of pride,
then I had visions of
a factory surrounded by
squalid rotting slums
where families are compelled
to work for slave wages
and to enslave their children
under such shocking conditions
to place on our shops' shelves
biscuits at sixty seven cents,
and I said "what can I do?"
and I knew all I could do
was to write these few sad lines:

Reflection While Writing Poem 1100

Is it time to stop and rest
to take stock of things
to review the whole situation?
I can't answer that one
for it is not given to me
to decide when or how,
I am just a pen-piece
through which words flow
a simple vibrating machine
that spews out simple words
in patterns and lack of patterns
words sprawled across a page
words written into infinity
compulsions of writings
totally beyond the writer's control,