

Flowers Continue to Flourish In Defiance of Noxious Fumes

Hlaine

So that there may be peace
When this great war ends
We have sacrificed
Since olden times
I no longer remember
The number of generations that have
Passed since then
Without consent, our lives were
Violated
Liberties and justice
And equal rights
Are akin to little balloons
Inside is the air and—pop pop
They burst and are lost

We are
Within a game of chess played
By the power-mad
Throughout the ages
Mere pawns to be
Sacrificed
Bullied by those who resort to guns
Bullied by those who seek political gain
We had no choice
Being born in this country
Was itself a crime

Whenever we were
Bullied
We had nothing but ourselves
The lame helped the blind
The blind supported the lame

Now . . . look
The state is desperately clinging to life

Whenever we demand justice
Oxygen runs out
Whenever we fight for freedom
Oxygen runs out

So that the state may continue to live
We needed to take care of our health
So as to hurt our health
The dictators cut off our access to oxygen¹

Those whom they want to keep alive—slavish cattle
What they want to serve—self-interest
What they want to multiply—gun barrels
What they want to practice—dark magic
What they want to see—
Our lives immiserated

They
Learned by heart the teachings of Buddha
Yet could not house Dhamma² within the heart
Though traveling around the world
They lack the honesty of a beggar
Though robed in gold cloaks
They lack the fidelity of even a thief
Though building pagodas and monasteries
They are human savages who commit genocide

They kill with guns
They kill with poverty

¹ During the third wave of COVID-19 in June-August 2021, the military junta restricted oxygen supplies to sick people, especially in the major cities, exacerbating suffering and increasing deaths.

² Dhamma here means Buddha's teachings as well as justice.

They kill with Nargis
They kill with COVID-19
They kill with oxygen deprivation

Yet they do not know
We are forest-pervading flowers
When one wilts into fertilizer
Yet another grows into a flower

This time
These flowers will flourish
In proportion to the sacrificial debt
Of all the ages
Flowers help and support one another
The forest-pervading flowers

