

The Ruin

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I.

I weep like a fountain
Over the Somali civil war.
With pain and despair, I weep.
The hatred, cruelty, and bigotry
The loyalty to clans
The evil that flowed from it.
Brothers killing brothers.
Brothers killing sisters.
Neighbors bombing neighbors.

I weep for my people.
I weep for the dead.
The loss of family members.
The maimed, the missing
Who died running away from war.
Died in the ocean
And sea in search of safety.
Died of malaria on their way
Died walking long distances in search of water and food
Killed by guns, bombs, and blasts.

I weep
For the insane, the depressed
The tortured, the traumatized
The mad, the mourning
The widowed, the wounded
The raped, the robbed
The looted, the limping
The displaced, the demoralized
The sick, the starving
The hapless, the helpless
The orphans, the oppressed – *Looma-ooye-yaasha*.

I weep and weep
For our women, I weep,
Suffering hell on earth
Raped and forced
To become captive wives
Raising in chaos.
Feeding children
Air for breakfast
Ashes for snack
Lullaby for lunch and
Sand for supper.

For our women, I weep.
Endured the destruction
Inhaled the smoke of war.
Became deaf to
The thunder of war
Tasted the sourness
Swallowed the pain of war
Suffered internal injuries.
Coughed up blood and pus
Shaken by gravity of weapons
Sucked up what was in their wombs.

I weep and weep
For our children, I weep,
Denied safety and schooling
Denied food and medicine
Denied a normal childhood
Playing only with corpses.

Learning the sound of different guns and bombs
Broken souls tarry toxic.
No nestle with nurture
No forgiveness
No forgetting
No one can undo what has been done.

I weep and weep
For the Somali flag, I weep,
Its azure field
A shining star of hope at its center
Five points for the five parts of Somaliland
Divided by the colonial empires
British and Italian Somaliland - our Somali Republic
Ethiopian Somaliland - Ogadenia
French Somaliland - Djibouti
The Kenyan Somaliland – Northern Frontier District (NFD).

I weep
For my flag, I weep
You are a symbol of Somali unity.
Bane of mini clan fiefdom flags
Overshadow your boon and beauty
Change your color, shape, and value.
What will you look like in the future?
What will become of you?
We are not what you stood for.
We don't deserve you.

I weep for my country of origin – The Ruin.
For the abandoned buildings, I weep,
The ruined schools, universities, and hospitals
Upon which we were building our future.

I weep for the dark streets.
The power was cut off.
The lines were ripped.
Dug up for copper
Then sold to buy weapons.
I even weep for the factories.
The machines were sold
Empty structures for an empty country.

For the forest and *indigenous* trees, I weep.
The *Cadaad*, the *Caday*
The *Damal*, the *Dhamas*
The *Garas*, the *Galool*
The *Qurac*, the *Qansax*
The *Xarar*, the *Xamar*
The *Yaaq*, the *Yicib*, I weep.

I weep
For the mango trees, I weep.
Thirty years it took for you to grow
In a matter of minutes you disappeared.
All cut down for charcoal.
For export
For Shisha.

Money for weapons
Weapons to kill.
I weep for the forest
Earth's lungs hewed.
Oh my Mango trees
Your sweet fruits will be missed
And the joy they bring.

I weep
For the ocean, I weep.
Beautiful and bountiful
Calming and cooling
Embracing us with your love.
Now you have become a dumping ground
For toxic wastes
From around the world.
There is no one to protect you.

I weep
For the marine animals, I weep.
The *Jaytar*, the *Jafane*
The *Kabali*, the *Koombilo*
The *Muungi*, the *Maleexaan*
The *Shanlo*, the *Shiiraan*
The *Qashaar*, the *Qalaanqasho*
The *Yuumbi*, the *Yaxaas*
Lying dead on the beaches.

I weep for the children
In these polluted waters
Swimming and becoming sick.
My ocean has become a place of death.

I weep when I think about the warlords
Creating monsters from a myriad of gangs
The *Mooriyaan* and the *Jirri*
Armed thugs and bandits
Roaming the country
Pillaging and plundering
Raping and robbing

Displacing our people
Killing them in cold blood
Ruining our society
Disharmonizing all diamond hearts
Destroying our country.

I weep when I think about the warlords.
Having no principle except stubbornness
Having no solution for our country
Having nothing except selfishness.
The thought of you sickens me.
I am glad you finally disappeared.

I weep,
The merciless, militant, mad Mullahs
Make me weep.
The a la ninjas.
An Evil and *Iblis*.
Assassins of leaders
The intellectuals, elders, and all
The a la Talabaneese.
The slaughters
The slashed throats of innocents.

Oppressors of all women kind
Made me weep.
The a la *al-Qaeda*.
Ignorant of Islam
Void of all conventional wisdom.

I weep.
The blood that flowed
Seeping through the soil
Contaminating the underground water
People drink it from the wells
Becoming vampires
With guns, bombs, and blasts
Merciless human beings
Habitual killers.

I weep and weep
October 14th, makes me weep.
On a hot sunny afternoon.
A white blast
Dark smoke clouded the sky
The earth shattered.
More than an earthquake
A volcano without lava
Buildings disappeared, sinking.

Flames blazed
Cars flew like airplanes
Landing on top
Of faraway buildings.
The roofs winged
Windows shattered
Doors firewood flavor
Dust and showering glasses.
A dark dusted oil covered everywhere.

Heads landing in faraway.
Distressed families
Wandering among the rubble
And wrecked vehicles
Searching for their loved ones.
Rumpling with pieces of flesh
Over-burned flesh
Children holding a leg
Perceived as their mother's.

A lone braceleted arm
Of a once beautiful young lady.
Unidentifiable bodies
Burned to the bone.
An acrid revolting smell
Haunts my dreams
For the years to come.
Four square miles vanished
Stripped from garments.

A truck full of sugar
Slowly burning sugar
Melting sugar smell mixed
With rancid smell.
Around the scattered flesh
Over six hundred innocent souls
Vanished for no reason and maimed hundreds.
Groans and desperate cries echoed
Like the doomsday.

People burned to ashes.
But petite Asha under collapsed concrete
Grabbed a booted leg of passerby
He jumped like a cheetah with a force
And thrown her body on the other side.
Glanced at her dusted face
"I thought you were a ghost."
For the 2017 *Soobe* explosion, I weep,
The *Hiroshima* of Somalia.

I weep and weep.
But I am tired of weeping.
Tired of cyclic evil souls.
Decades of weeping
Dried up the well.
No heart and Will to weep.
The fountain is void.
I am tired of weeping.
I can weep no more.

II.

Where are the Somali leaders?
Don't we have trailblazers?
Where are the Somali intellectuals?
Don't we have gurus?
Where are the Somali people?
Don't we have heroes and sheroes?

Where is the world?
Aren't we part of the globe?
Where are the countries?
Aren't we a country?
Where are the people?
Aren't we human beings?

Where is the United Nations?
Aren't we a member of the U.N.?
Where are the Africans?
Aren't we Africans?
Where is the Horn?
Aren't we part of the Horn of Africa?

Why have we been abandoned?
When we have been crying for help!

Oh, our men!
Why are we ruined?
Why have our cries not been heard?
Why are our voices muted?
Why does our future seem so gloomy?

We had a country and a home.
Waging war and disaster
Turning us into single mothers and fathers.
Orphans and homeless children.
Making us refugees scattered around the world.

Abandoning us for greed and power
Abandoning us for ego
Abandoning us for clan and self-interest.
Abandoning us for *Khat*.
Abandoning us for money.

Agreeing to do nothing more than fight
Thinking that one clan is better than the other.
Why not forgive and forget?
Why not reconcile
And commit to peace?

Oh, my fellow Somalis!
Dispersed we are around the world
Crying about the losses of loved ones,
Living the sorrows of not having seen them for the longest time.

Feeling guilt for living in peaceful countries
And not being able to do anything about our own.
Sacrificing our lives.
And bearing the burden of family responsibilities.

What has been done that has not doomed us all?
What part of this fatal feud have you been pregnant with?
Were you the clan defender donating money
Or supporting the mad Mullahs?

Buying weapons to fight against another clan
Whittling the knives for the weak to kill
Keeping violence alive
Instead of standing up for what is right – peace?

Denouncing worm warlords
And mad Mullahs of wheel death
Who are corralling us in caves
That could consume the core of us.

Rebuilding our country.
Rejuvenating our society.
And making a difference everyday, and
In any way we can.

III.

Oh, our women!
Suffering every day.
Taking the burden on your shoulders
Like all women of Africa
You are the backbone of the family.

Supporting family members everywhere diligently
Breadwinners and homemakers
In home and in foreign lands
Where you know not the language
Let alone culture and norms.

Becoming the lifeline of families
Caring for the ailing
Nurturing the children
Resilient like rock
Towered and exuded resilience.

You are the only glue that is holding us together
But you need to come together
You need to become the leaders
You are the beacon of hope
Because you are the only hope.

Oh, our youth!
You are the beacon of hope.
Although you don't live in the same country,
Speak the same language
Or share the same culture
You are the beacon of hope.

You are Somalis regardless of where you are
Or where you were born.
Learn your roots, spirituality, and values
Learn your language and culture
Connect to one another.
You are the beacon of hope.

Concentrate on education
And avoid crime and violence
You are our greatest natural resources
You are the future leaders
Maybe you can do better than us.
You are the beacon of hope.

When I left decades ago
Somalia was beautiful!
I remember childhood in my city of *Eldher*
Drinking fresh milk and eating spicy baked *dhaylo*
Sweetened and soaked with lots of love.
Growing up in *Waberi*, Mogadishu.
Dipping *Bajiye* with *Basbaas*
Eating unripe green mangos
Rubbed with salt and sprinkled with lime juice.
Eating Friday picnic lunches at *Jungle*.

Going to *Liido* beach
Looking at the horizons
Where the blue Indian Ocean and the sky meet
Watching the waves on the blue water
A moving light
Disappearing and reborn at the same time.
The buildings overlooking the beach.
Walking in Downtown Mogadishu
From the *ex-parliament* to *Shabeele*
Having *mango* ice cream in *Jumba Jalaato*.

Touring the dams of the river that divides *Afgooye*.
Visiting orchards in *Janaale*.
Swimming the exotic beach of *Warsheikh*.
Enjoying the gorgeous gardens of *Snai*
Stopping at the *Shabeele* River in *Jawhar*
Standing on the river bank
Seeing the tree shadows on the water
Saluting a silicone-like shadow
Sending a reflection of a tree
Back from the bottom.

Our people were hospitable
Kind, caring, and loving
Sharing and welcoming strangers.
Those were my glorious days.

When I returned after the civil war.
Downtown Mogadishu was a ghost town
That even cars avoided.
The *Snai* sugar cane factory had disappeared
Weeds replaced its once beautiful gardens.
I saw a ruined country
And a collapsed society.

In a paradise lost
The people are still hopeful
But they are helpless and hurting.
I felt like a stranger amongst my own people
And in the soil of my motherland.
What happened to the lore of the culture I was raised in?
What happened to the people I grew among?

O peace!
Where are you?
I long for peace and stability
I long for tranquility.
I envision a disaster-free Somalia
I envision peaceful Somalia
I envision a cure for clannism
I envision Somalis united for peace
I envision peace and reconciliation
I envision peace and love
I envision a democracy.

I envision total human rights
I envision environmental protection and sustainability
I envision a world without war, famine, and disaster
I envision a cure for COVID-19
I envision a complete ecosystem
I envision peace in the Horn of Africa
I envision peace around the world.
I envision peace in Somalia
I envision Somalia rising like a phoenix
From the flames of fighting
I envision overt, true peace.

Acknowledgement: I am dedicating this poem to my nephew, Abdulaziz Mohamud Mohamed (Shine Talbert), and his comrades who have been missing since boarding a boat from Libya to Italy in January, 2003; to all the people who died in search of safety and better lives; to my sister Hawa-Lul Mohamed Hassan who was killed in 1991 during the civil war because of her clan; and to the thousands of others, and the Somali people who are suffering because of this foolish conflict.