

# New Directions

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## Poems

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**Martyrdom**

In the dreamy hours  
of the Opening Night  
the rote incantation  
of ritual matters  
was set aside.  
The news was broken.

Did I hear it right?  
It was drowned in  
the burst of gun fire  
re-ver-berating  
in the stillness of the night,  
the "funeral dirge"  
of the freedom fighter.

The news was broken,  
the Congress shaken.

Ibrahim is gone.  
Ibrahim 'Afa',  
the name that struck  
their stony heart  
like a burning arrow,  
is now a memory.

Ibrahim is gone,  
we were suddenly told,  
and I turned to you,  
bereaved companions,  
and I searched in vain  
for the salient emotion,  
of homage in grief  
and lacrimal commotion.  
But I saw instead  
steely, stoic silence  
born of sacrifice,  
which has taken so much  
we have ceased to mourn  
or count our losses.

Ibrahim is gone.  
And his martyrdom  
stirs in me a storm  
of painful memories;  
familiar faces flash  
back and forth  
in the film of my mind.

Ibrahim, you're gone  
and softly, softly  
do we weep for you;  
softly, so as not  
to hear our cries  
and expose ourselves.  
'tis a martial custom  
sanctioned by necessity.

The torrential tears  
contained in this ink  
flow from the spring  
of repressed sorrow.  
But the ink will dry  
and the tears give way  
to a joyful tomorrow.

Ibrahim, you're gone  
and yet you are here,  
you and the rest  
of our living dead.  
Our martyrs live;  
we see them, hear them,  
touch them daily  
as we tend our  
flowers of freedom  
and the growing tree  
of liberty, nurtured  
by their  
— precious  
— blood.

Bereket Habte Selassie  
*Howard University*

**A Million Tomorrows**

The sun will rise  
Early in the morn  
Little babies  
Will still be born.

Water will glisten  
In the roaring bay  
And folks will sing  
Of each new day.

The earth will rotate  
And seagulls fly  
While clouds gather fluff  
And color the sky.

Days will die  
And moments will move  
Thoughts will soar  
In the same old groove.

But whatever hurts  
And whoever sorrows  
Won't matter a bit  
In a million tomorrows.

Janet R. Griffin  
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