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-verberating in the stillness of the night, the “funeral dirge” of the freedom fighter.

The news was broken, the Congress shaken. Ibrahim is gone. Ibrahim 'Afar', 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
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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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