

A War-Ravaged World

We live in a war-ravaged world full of broken dreams and broken people, and for what? To hear the silent curvatures of the devil's ink on the land of the forgotten, breaking the forsaken body of soiled ground. Or to hear silent meowing sounds as you follow the end of the road only to find yourself embodied as Schrödinger's cat, both dead and alive until the box opens.

On my days when entering a war zone, I find that the silent barks of the dictators are a disease infiltrating into the minds of all those and manifesting in their hands as soulless clucks of metal. I realized our leader's broken promises of peace are not found through each shot, like typical passing cars in the morning traffic, nor the wickedly silent scarred memory of the neglected gravestones.

So, as I sit here on the bloody red-blackened asphalt, which resembles a wet photograph, I wish upon a time. A time when the concreted remains would breathe fresh air. A time when the same winding road of asphalt led to the golden ornaments of a city capital rather than the ornaments of sorrowful ghosts and spirits. A time when peace could be heard, beckoning from the hills and the countryside of our forgotten world.

I gaze upon the reflection in the puddle; the photographic clicks flash a human walking along the same asphalt. Their rhythm of soles upon the blacktop street bounce and salter, tickling the underbelly of the Earth, and the pulsating clinks and clanks of a bracelet dangle on the figure's wrist. In the distance, exotic birds begin the ballet of the eventide while the sonorous whistling

from the villagers appears as the figure passes through the picturesque stacked huts in the golden city center. The figure is determined; it has a purpose, or rather, a place to return to – as the land whispers its name through the roots of the soil that caress the Earth.

The staccato-like movement of brisk walking stops as the figure appears in front of a stoned house with a bright blue door. Warm cooking smoke greets the figure as the door opens to a circular table of old and young faces. As they roll the dough for the steaming pot in the background, the younger faces radiate the dangly sounds of chatter from their bracelets and charms. A closer look at the bracelet reveals three charms that lay: one for the past, one for the present, and one for the future - a symbol of prosperity, one might say - especially in a time needed for a ritual feast. While the women at the table fill the room with sighs and gossip, the men bring out wooden instruments that reverberate centuries of traditions and play a melodic concert for the whole village to hear. The soil of the land, the aura of family love, and the culture and quirks of the village echo through the photograph that this soul gazes upon. The soul could fantasize many things from the jangles of gold or dominance of the Earth; yet, it fantasizes the collages of such familiar sounds that have long disintegrated.

People quite mistake the sound of peace, interpreting it for the epitome of silence - the flawless rolling waves by the beach when no one is around or the stoic presence found in a secret haven of the bustling city. It is instead the chatter at the sundown ritual dinner with a father's big belly chuckles and sibling squeals, the pencil shavings in the classroom floor as one meticulously jots down the numbers of Pi from the chalkboard, or the badgering and burgeoning of the seagulls at

a local town marketplace. In other words, it is the sound of home that fills the silent void left by our war-ravaged world.

As I reflect on my life, sitting on the asphalt remains left by the frequent bombings, peace was sought to be the solution to the ridden war crimes and cries of children, but it was always a metaphor. Peace: simply the essence of a golden thread that held the clanky charms of my greatest memories one by one. But once the blade's sharp edges snipped the thread, silence endured: the sweet past was once gone, and all the charms scattered on the asphalt, waiting to be picked up by helpless souls.

Now, I say,

Dear society,

Let's go back in time,

A chance to reverse societal decay

From the silence that plagues our people and land.