

Cities of Smoke

Cities of smoke
Smouldering burning
Blazing In a configuration
Of stone concrete steel
And human flesh

Cities of rubble debris wreckage
Rubbish and broken homes
Pasted with remains
With the white bones of children

Cities crackling baking raging
Into the nights of nothingness
Into the torched dawns of annihilation
Proclaiming the time of the beast
Announcing the apocalypse
The undoing of ten thousand years of civilization

Cities of smoke
Preach to us cities of broken young
Villages of violated children
Wailing distraught mothers
Helpless raving fathers

Preach to us cities of staring graves
Gaping old men and mutilated women
I had not thought that death has undone so many
That the earth sprouts corpses

Cities of smoke and shards of concrete
Forging against the nothing of emptiness
Sacilegious sculptures hewn out of terror
What is that sound high in the air
Murmurs of maternal lamentation

The houses of the poor stand inviting like
Skeletons stabbing the collapsed horizons
Piercing the fallen firmament
Spearing the stars in their spheres
Through the cascading stardust of blood.

O let me not stare at the ancient forests,
Blazing trails of damnation
And let me not wander through
The burnt murky fields
Where the children of the apple tree once played

Let me not search for the concealed corpses
In the arms of the scorched earth
Wailing under the sweaty feet of the butchers.
O for the orchards of Damascus

for the norias of Hama
O for the golden meadows of Homs

By the walls of Daraa ,
By the walls of Douma,
By the ruins of Hama,
By the apocalypse that was Homs,
The city of the thousand sorrows,
I sat down and cried

By the river of Deir Azzor
By the trembling quaking earths
Of Ancient Syria as
The armies of doom march
Spitting fire and annihilation
I sat down and cried

By Ebla the white of the five millenniums,
Ebla the mother of libraries baptized by fire
By fair Mary the radiant city
Of the Goddess of the fountain
Ishtar the bright the queen of heaven
I sat down and sobbed

By Ugarit the giver of alphabets
And the first harmonies
By the swan of the desert
Where Zenobia the empress of the East once stood

By the tremulous monuments of Palmyra,
Its loveliness squandered by the looters
For thirty pieces of silver
I sat down and wept

By the majestic walls and battlements
Of the citadel of Saladin
Holding court among the stars
I sat down and shed my burning tears
For Aleppo, for its chronicles
For its story of civilization

By the spectres of the ancient
Kings and queens of Syria
Peopling the heavens to stand guard
By the cradles of mankind
I bent and cried tears of thunder
To see so much given to dust

The vast deluge of profane time
Surged and charged
Inscribing the tablets of the cities of the dying
The horizons collapsed
But the cities of death yawned and gaped
Roamed by Kali of the skulls
Caring nothing for the dying and the dead.

I recall and remember
That rhythm of the fountain
In the hidden walled garden
That whispering measure of the lute-
What have you done to the children
What have you done to the jasmine
I recall and remember

On the Road to Damascus
Along the Street Called Straight
I sat down and wept
The heirloom of civilized man
Awaits Armageddon and the descent
From the crackling heavens of the Antichrist.

Behold the modern day Golgotha
The hill of skulls
Rising and still rising
Atop of the cracked cities of Syria
And I shall show you a thousand Christs.
Staggering under their crowns of thorns,
They hug their torn children
The heat blinding them
The bombs of the executioner
Mangling slicing

Shape me, cries the formless devastation
Remake me, wails the scatterings
Raise me, howls the shredded concrete
Reroot me weeps the trees in their ashes
Remember me moans the marble, the stone the basalt
Remember remember remember me
Call the lost dead in their lost dreams

The father is history
The mother the repository of civilizations
They will not darken my inheritance
They are but the shadow of death
The dark deed that howls
In the darkest dens of memory
The primordial chaos the nothing
The sun will rise again
The destiny of the Mother that shook the cradle
Shall be arbitrated by life not by death.

Alisar Iram