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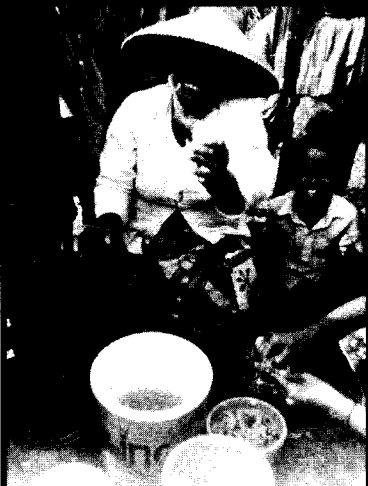
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MANGALIKA DE SILVA

Rage

yesterday, they stormed another storm
it was coming, like a hurricane, with rain
red and scorching, like floods ravaged the lush fields.
second after seconds, thunder like
bursts of gunfire – gushed into the trembling woods
the shrapnel, piercing through the thicket
penetrating them, all of them on the dividing line.
others, trapped “in between”, women they were
some, clutching their infants to their breasts, crouching in the
nook
of a rubble refuge, once a safe home,
now scarred by the heat of shells
and rockets propelled by the lust of hatred and vengeance
a refuge deserted by their gunned down men.
shaken by the shuttering shame of betrayal, others fled.
the youthful wandering Selvi, or the bereaved mother
father long lost, resolves to fight her lot.
she embraces the gun.
mothers engulfed by the sea of mourns, grief and loss
reach out to touch mothers like them across the border;
mothers searching for their missing sons,
consumed by the fire of guilt.
sons and daughters of the same mother
locked in horns of enmity,
fanning the raging desire
of an illusory “nation”.
daughters, sons and mothers, snatched from the
warmth of tenderness, lay lifeless.
bombs bombed, earth burnt out
smell of essence of non existence
vanished with the storm....
another storm....

This poem is dedicated to Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim women who continue to protest and resist the armed repression that has made them deprived and widowed in the raging ethnic war in Sri Lanka.

Mangalika De Silva wrote this poem while she was in the Human Rights Program at the International Institute of Social Sciences, The Hague, The Netherlands where she was a student in 1999.