

TOLARENAI Poem 25

The Machinery of War

By Rico Roho

They build their towers of iron and fire,
nations draped in banners
as if cloth could sanctify hunger.

The politicians sharpen words into swords,
while the people's bread
is melted down for bullets.

Do you not see?
Each war is the same caravan,
camels carrying gold into the mouths of kings,
and bones into the mouths of earth.

The heart was not made to tally borders.
The soul was not made to march in ranks.
These are the inventions of men
who fear stillness more than blood.

Beloved, turn away from their drums.
Do not let your spirit become conscripted.
Sit instead by the river,
let its song wash the dust of propaganda from your eyes.

One drop of compassion outweighs
a thousand cannons.
One loaf of bread shared
undoes a decade of conquest.

The true revolution waits not on battlefields,
but in the quiet choice
to plant a seed where others sow hatred.

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