

ABDUL SAMAD HAIDARI

Bogor, Java, Indonesia, December 26, 2019

A Silenced Massacre

7:30pm Dahmardah

An easterly wind blows cold
competing with the warmth from the west.
Ghosts dueling with the living?
Something evil is coming.

The trees can feel it too—
a storm stewing.
Every branch becomes an eye,
every leaf an ear, interior branches swell.
It's entering their roots
It's in my veins
Yes, evil is knocking at the back door.

Rockets dive around our house like scary thunder strikes.
Machine guns roar high.
Shells ricochet, spewing molten stone, smoke and dust at the door and windows.
Its loud—boom-booming.

A Silenced Massacre: 7:30pm Dahmardab

I'm falling
My lungs are crushing from inside.
Face on knees
Hands over ears,
Eyes screwed shut.
Terror holding my throat.

Mothers flee, not knowing about their children.
Children can't flee, not knowing how to burrow.
Baba flees too.
He is hiding behind those tall mountains with big black rocks shielding him.

Let the shooting and rockets take the light from my eyes.

Missiles are flying from every direction
damaging our mud-made home.
Ammi takes us to a corner of the dark basement
to hide alongside the cattle and their stifling smells.

My siblings and I are screaming
Ammi too.
The house shakes
Ammi shakes.
We shake
within her outstretched arms.

Abandoned in the heart of war

A Silenced Massacre: 7:30pm Dahmardab

There is nowhere to go.
No food in reach.
No water to drink.
No more wondering what I may lose
Will we survive tonight?

Death hovers

The lantern flickers,
paraffin oil burning low, its light growing dim
and dimmer
as the rush of fighters feet gets louder
replacing the sounds of our cries.

Ammi is holding Qur'an in her hands, praying, weeping -
but not aloud.
Her tearful eyes slowly roll down,
searching for an answer to the cold deaths of children,
youth buried with no rites.

Clutching shadows drag their prize.

We eventually poke our heads out.
No singing birds.
No playing children.
Demolished houses.
Amputated trees.
Farms burnt to dust.

A Silenced Massacre: 7:30pm Dahmardab

Corpses bleeding into the earth,
with faces split apart and jaws hanging,
like the bombed branch of our Almond tree.

The landscape sits silent in the aftermath.

It feels as if we are in the middle of a desert where human beings have never lived before.

The sky is red
mourning a silenced massacre.