

## **Activism**

Seven years behind bars for defending  
a river. Water that brews tea, coffee  
and hot chocolate.

Boils, steams meat and vegetables.

Washes dishes, pots and pans,  
clothes and diapers.

Where people swim in dug-outs,  
streams and creeks.

Paddle, float and bathe,  
bask beneath showers. This pleasure  
flushes our waste.

Water where infants  
slide into life.

Seven years.

"Jailed for defending a Sacred River."

Covid steals wind's breath.

No perfumed flowers,  
fragrances of autumn,  
roasting chicken,  
cinnamon and ginger cookies baking.

Covid the vaccine  
within reach. Yet  
a journalist's behind bars  
jaws wired-shut  
unable to inform others  
that covid can be controlled  
if only.

If only  
the powers at be  
could let the sunshine thaw  
within their hearts.

A man shivers.

Another at the intersection  
holds a carboard sign.

A young woman begs,  
her rags in a thread-bare tent.

No outhouse, no three-ply toilet paper.

Children scrouge at dumpsites  
where rats scurry.  
A freedom fighter weeps  
behind bars while his father  
is alone on his deathbed.  
Like the holy man in Jerusalem  
he will fight this silence.

A woman holds a finger to  
her shotgun wound,  
ribs cracked from military boots,  
spread-eagled violence tears.  
She will stand beside  
the children,  
the women  
against this gendered savagery.

LGBTQ is to be sworn at,  
bodies violated,  
kicked and stomped on  
left to die.  
LGBTQ must have the strength  
of the wild beasts that know  
survival, and still march  
with Pride.

At fifteen a teen sends a video  
to the world after a  
murder is committed  
in front of her.  
Her home demolished,  
night raids rob fitful sleep.  
Children beneath staircases, beds,  
huddle in closets  
while the pariah feed off their skin.

A policeman's foot against the throat  
of a Black man. Another shot in the back.  
They have been accused of robbery. Still  
they fight for freedom.

Amnesty can tell you more.  
They wield paper and pen,  
fight to keep the spirit  
strong of these lone fighters,  
they push for intervention.  
Raise awareness.

Amnesty stands in solidarity,  
hope and friendship,  
love and compassion.

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