

A Plea

Translated by Jo-Anne Elder

Shhhhh!
The beating of a heart
a cry
a baby is born
The beating of two hearts
two cries together
suffering and breathing
Crying out for life
crying out of fear
crying out of pain

We are not alone at our birth

Shhhh!
The beating of eyelids
delicate butterflies
on the edge of everything
of the void
of life
Palpitations
breath inheld before the unknown

Here
the buzzing of flies
around the mouth of a starving child
There
the vomit of an obese man
who has eaten too much

Here
corks are pulled
“Champagne for all!”
There
the last drop of water
for a woman suffering

I hear the arrivals
and the departures
the flights of birds
the human fright

Shh! There is a fluttering of wings
Snip! Scissors to maim them
Crack! A slap on the cheek
Whack! A spank to break the child's will

Gun shots
scatter the crowd

Shh!
A fall
The bird falls into the void
Nuclear waves are propelled through the air
Tension rises
everything sets the nerves on edge
The child calls out
no answer
The parents' nerves give out
they bicker

The war begins
a world war
in a home
Who will send off the first missile?

I can hear crying
someone is sad
Someone is angry
Clack!
A slap for the rebellious child
Clack!
A lover slams the door
Clack!
The neighbour is sick of it
Bang!
He hits a car
Wham!
They have come to blows
feet flying
fists flying

For blows struck with a hammer
years in the slammer

Later
an entire country will take up arms

macabre arms
refined by brutality

Other nations
unforgiving
enter the battlefield
Everywhere there is fighting
humans are treated like dogs
guts are ripped out with knives
the world is poorer for war
for the enriched uranium bombs

With a grenade
a child explodes
BOOM!
Another bomb
a race

So many tombs
so many tombs

Bodies everywhere
Why?
Why so many madmen?

There are two of us at our birth
Must we be alone
while we live and die?

I hear crying
cries of loneliness
cries of helplessness

Who wants to live and die alone in a corner?

There are two of us at our birth
Let's hope there are millions of us to survive

I hear the heartbeat of the world
a shudder of love
a magic rhythm

Let's hope there are millions of us to be reborn
to rebuild the world together