

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 cardboard 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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Parliamentary Poet Laureate**