

Somalia

There is no water.
No droplets left in the trees.
No rivers flowing free
and even the sand beneath your feet-
seems to ache.

But there is not one drop.
Not one rainy gust of wind.
No water in wells, nor lakes nor streams.
No, there is no rain.
Only dust and dry throats.
Allahu Akbar.

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You prayed in congregation.
Bent in Rukuc.
Bowed in Sujood
And begged the skies to release
what it withheld-
Praying in Somali,
when Arabic failed you.

Oh Somalia, you survived war.
Learnt to make love to the sound of gunshots
And gave birth to children,
who knew how to appreciate what little they had.
But drought – drought crippled you-
brought you to your knees
And left you dry tongued- chap lipped-
and waiting for the world to care.

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But there has been no word.
No help on the horizon,
No trucks driving food and water.

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Oh Somalia, haven't they seen enough to change their ways?
Haven't they seen the photos you let them take,
when they came to you in dadaab-
-Men and women skin as white as the moon.

And you ran to them;
As if their white could bring relief -
and you let them take photos of the way
Your babies clung to your limping breasts;
their infant mouths desperate against your empty chests.

Oh Somalia, you told them -
with what little English you knew-
The way your hearts broke when you started to feel their bodies
Becoming thinner in your arms and
how it broke again when they no longer moved
As much as they used to.

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Oh Somalia,
I'm sorry, that we have to translate your pain
into a foreign language
Before everyone can relate.
That 30,000 of your children
have to die before we open our eyes
to climate change.

I'm sorry,
Your mothers had to leave their babies bodies,
when they could no longer carry them;
And Hooyo's mercy meant -
that infant bodies were found
Placed beneath the shades of trees
or away from harm.

Oh Somalia,
I'm sorry that this is your reality;
That this happens to you time and time again
Yet – the world pretends it cannot see you.