

## A HOT DECEMBER DAY.

This was the day of the call  
of the mother drum:  
It's rolling echoes, it's deepening rumble  
in the valleys, in the hills,  
an ominous call.

A hot December day  
with eagles flying high:  
wisps of dust from bare feet  
on a gravel road.

The distant mirage..... a dry parch in the throat,  
the rustle of the grass  
along the village path,  
bespeaking the urgency of the call  
of the mother drum.

Salty beads of sweat  
on a wrinkled forehead,  
tired eyes, set deep in the sockets,  
witness to long harrowing years  
of suffering in silence.

It was a call  
to the mothers in the land:  
palms clasped tight behind each head,  
dressed in rags, dressed in black.  
The racking wail for the lost, and the fallen  
against the merry laughter of those in triumph:  
The wicked twinkle in the eyes of the man,  
against the heartbreaking emptiness in the homes:  
The hopeless look of the orphanchild...  
and it's widowed mother,  
all too well, the famous hallmark  
in the state passtime;  
A dark ritual of bloody cataclysms,  
by maniacs come to roost  
in the cockpit of the statecraft:  
The muzzles of their hungry guns  
stuck firm at the necks of it's citizenry..  
meekly chocking in the acrid pungency  
of imported gunpowder.

It was a call to the wombs that laboured  
to come to hear the pronouncement  
that would finally tell them  
their sons were really gone... gone for good.  
And that their hairs,  
should now be shaved:

And that fresh strips from the bark of the “ogali” tree  
tied at the temple, around the heads,  
would further confirm  
It’s all over.

And as they came.  
And with their eyes they saw the man:  
It was a strange man,  
Herald of State... with a list:  
a long long list, for indeed,  
many had gone, much too long.  
And with their ears they heard the man,  
messenger of death, come to boast it's take:  
Telling them they were jiggers  
their children were lice  
their dead were parasites  
their ancestors were anti-people  
their unborn....anti-revolutionaries.

And as they heard the curse of death fall  
on all they had brought into the world,  
even those still to come,  
darts of pain tore at their hearts,  
tremors of agony  
rocked their frail bodies,  
vengeance pulsed in their veins,  
but there was none left to sound the war cry  
on that hot December day,

Catherine Alum Odora, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1988, in Stockholm, Sweden