ORPHANS OF ARMENIA (ORIGINAL IN SPANISH)

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Category: Opinions

by Juan R. S. Yelanguezian, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Orphans of Armenia
Epical Rhapsody

I
Orphans of Adaná, orphans of the deserts…
Today mayhap citizens that know not their nationality?
or men that live condemned to rootlessness?

Orphans of the mountains, music of ancestors,
privilege of a world that trails ephemeral signs.
Mayhap a genocide can obliterate the Armenian soul
in the cruelty of the facts
facts turned legend for fear of suffering?

Orphans of your winds, your stones and your sky.
We drown in the bluelined haze of memories.

Orphaned of your dialogue we wake to the sun
and sing the hymns to the new day.

Subtle mystery not to own you.
Void that drags us in a mystic space,
the absence of our dead.
In the darkness we no longer hear their steps,
neither do their voices call us, nor their eyes light up.
Our orphaned elders keep silent
the horror of their pleas,
others carried them in secret to the ends of
the darkness
We submerge ourselves in the sensitive encounter of
seeing ourselves mutilated
paradoxic ripping, sacrifice of thousands,
ancestral wine of our uncertain madagh.
Slow sacrifice of a people orphaned from their mutilated
soil,
mutilated spirit, mutilated echo.

Orphans from Sis, Mush, Van,
orphans from Sasún, Kars, Erzerum.

Hear the voices, shout your plea
as the pilgrim nears the meeting.

(I adhere to the gloom of the silence of the old house
that my grandfather built with his own hands,
mutilated hands, orphaned at Tarso.
I am oppressed by the murmur of screams from another time
mayhap I will lean toward the climax and embrace it
because it managed to create with its seed a new world
behind the hell).

II
Orphaned from the mysteries of our parents
from watching the faraway growth of the ancestral home.
Orphans of uncertainties and vital encounter.
(Love; neither made, nor spoken).
Orphans of love, daily earthly
rootlessness,
has it perhaps been a natural sacrifice
that has led our people to lavish a living future
by donating their lives in exile?

Orphans of Marash, does the breeze still play
the strings
of your violin, and do not your melodies drown
in a litany of mystery?
(I would have to be tied and made deaf, to the
tallest mast
of my life, for me not to hear and draw near to the sortilege
of your songs).

Orphans of Der el Zor, those voices pursue me
as shared encounters of pain
and draw near as tales
of a history we had no wish to live.
And they draw near like the sharp edge of sables slashing
bodies,
just the swish of sables like an arrhythmic game of
massacre,
that shape metallic murmurs in the atmospheric immensity
of the sordidly beautiful landscape.

Orphans! the blasts have not detonated
but death smothered in the silence,
as an organ of the body rots
and in appearance one continues to live.

Orphaned by banishments,
disintegrated families lost in misfortune,
children that never knew the destiny of their siblings,
women who never gave themselves up and married
death,
eyes from Masís that are not aware they are Armenian.

Orphans.
Unfathomable mystery of a life
that demands such a sacrifice in order that a people live.

(The peasant whose heart was pierced through the Gospels
he clutched to his breast
and who fell into the furrow he dug himself.
The glinting dagger that sharp
murdered the mother of a friend.
The home in flames, the nightly fleeing,
the port of Smyrna set afire
and only the void of the silence
over the twilight bodies
sole silence).

Orphans we still wake up and pray
in our intimate prayer,
we intone hymns thanking for the light of dawn
and we breakfast on work and creed.
We interlace our blood
so that the longed for son will be born
and we give him our subdued affection,
our myths, our prayers.
And not only our letters,
also our lullabies rocking old dreams.

Our joy is as ancient as our verses.
Our pain is as ancient as our songs.
We invoke the brightness of our open spaces.

Orphans, yes, from our soil
Mayhap mysterious musicians of exile?
Mayhap carriers of our spirit of cereal
that germinates in the universe?
Does not a sheaf of hope sustain us
in the knowledge that the birds
arrive without announcing themselves?

Buenos Aires, 1985

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