Poems

Dewasundari Arasanayagam
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HIBISCUS

Red eyes
is that all I
can show of
my feelings?

Bright red eyes remember
the hibiscus I used to pick
from that wild garden
place in glass decanters
watch them sparkle

red eyes reflect you
on red earth we scratched
out squares played hopscotch
screamed and shrilled
nearby limestone quarries
gape like craters on
a surface scarred

and Kandathe’s red porial
which we ate in her
mud walled house
floor clamped clean with
dung goats wandered
in the garden

Suramanium picked glass
today white, fresh
and the wailers crying
out professional tears
as trod on shallow seas
washing over pots and ashes

those of our fathers and now
our brothers while we slip through
life, non-persons shadowless
red eyes
RETURN I

What awaits me when I go back
to that place called home
bitterness and guns from which
blood flows frothy streams
I ride clouds air sky below
figures dance in war formation

It was different then there
people danced in marathons
went rafting dangerous waters while
I stood in subways, music, listening
others in basement bookstores searching
and I sprawled out on sun cemented

steps shadows feet heads hands voices
coins tinkling a guitar fingers toes
tap while I find myself drifting
war formations to games in sun shine
squares you fought with real guns
real fodder little beings toppling

heels over heads absurd creatures the
dead and the killers blood seeps out
confused colours reds and swollen purples
blaze on sands then seas while a tired
sun brings me back home.

THE FIGHTER

Terrorist
conjure up a
vision
gun-toting
insane
assassin
beast/coward
combined
terrorise the
good
evil force
stalks its prey
on concrete paths
lurks behind
glass windows

bombs planted
in high-rise
buildings
minister’s gardens
but why is it
that all I can
see is a young man

legs blown off
hands crushed
head intact
lying on a pavement
seconds before he
died?

AWAY – MAINE, 1986

My thumb reeks of garlic
my body feels heavy with
wondering ‘are you dead?’

I walk, slide slip
rain beats down on head uncovered
I taste it drips into
mouth tears dampen

thoughts of you
and I distanced
cannot do much

but race into a
nowhere place with
imaginary messages bearing
‘Are you alive?’

Standing over a table
slicing ginger talk of
home sounds of ping pong
balls bouncing jolting
my thoughts back to you
But they roll away.