

MOURNING FOR MY LAND

by Kevin Grant

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Maybe middle age is making me sentimental.
But still I mourn the dying of the land that gave me life:
A colony where culture and colour clashed into conflict.
Conscripted, I took up arms as the lesser evil,
Only to discover no evil is less – only camouflaged

I mourn for those who did not return home:
- shattering pain of gunshot – a bland announcement on the radio
- immolating oblivion of explosion – a nameless feast for vultures
- slow agony of illness and infection – a slowly fading memory of a face
A generation decimated.

I mourn for those whose bodies were mangled in maelstrom of war:
- athlete made slow – shot and gasping on one lung
- poet of light blinded – disfigured by napalm
- engineer handless – frustrated by hair-triggered mine
Gifts squandered.

I mourn for those who survived scarred in soul and spirit:
- gentle twin twisted – collector of human “trophies”
- singer turned alcoholic – chasing the adrenaline rush
- friend become “comrade” – bitter in unforgiveness
Goodness warped.

I mourn for my land dying, polarised by greed and pride:
- arrogant fools – deeming themselves better by oppressing others
- egoistic leaders – blaming their present evil on people long past
- racist politics – taking lives and livelihoods because of skin colour.
Community consumed.

I mourn in futility – for war served only to exchange oppressors
I mourn in sympathy – for suffering is still the lot of those who suffered then
And I mourn in guilt – for my hands are red with participation in both
War and suffering