

*Sanjukta Dasgupta***Ah Peace!**

Peace is a warm shawl
Within the sunless darkness
Of the serene womb

The first flash of light
The first cry
The first touch of hands
The first violence
The snipping of the cord

Peace is as fragile as a snowflake
Peace glistens like a drop of dew
On a smiling leaf sunning itself
Peace surpasses all understanding
Peace lies at the heart of every outcry

Peace is stabbed each time
As the knife enters the heart
Peace is in splinters
As the bombs drop, guns fire
Tanks roar, missiles zoom

Drones drop precise death

With diabolic accuracy.

All is toxic everywhere

Landscapes are pregnant with landmines

The skies are darkened by the wings of vultures

The thunderous fighter planes advance like sharks

Yet compassionate peace

Is an invincible passionate warrior

That nestles at the core of being

It sprouts like leaves of grass

On the charred wastelands

Of Kurukshetra and Troy

Vietnam, Iraq, Libya,

Syria and Palestine

Peace that truly surpasses all understanding

Shanti, Shanti, Shanti!

Coffin Factory

Death has been insatiable this year
Such greed for more and more
Crematoriums and cemeteries
Chock a bloc with processions
Of the inert who arrive on stretchers
For the final journey through the exit gate

Death is a greedy capitalist this year
Coffin factories have never thrived so much
The demand far exceeding supply
“We need to produce more coffins”
Thundered ministers and governments
As they wheeled past the tanks and fighter jets
“We need vaccines to reduce coffin home deliveries”
Rose the cries in the Parliaments

This festive season as drums and conch shells
Create the auspicious buzz
This festive season as Christmas trees sparkle
Sighs from the thousands and thousands of coffins
Will haunt the midnight mass
“If only you had made vaccines instead of tanks and guns”

Is the one spiralling refrain that will haunt
Those who still have an unsullied conscience

What a Skewed World!

When you say you love me

I feel you must have found out

My bank account balance

When you say everything is all right

I am sure something is wrong everywhere

When you say we are the best

I can sense we are going downhill

When you say we will conquer Space

I know we are cramped for space

In our hearts and homes

When the virus rages

We just compete with death counts

I know then nothing is under control

When you say our callous cavalier stances

Have created hotspots and containment zones

I know that there are not enough ventilators

When you say relax, we have reached the plateau

I know it is now the silence of the wasteland

It is now only sighs from graveyards

Yet hope rises in the doleful air

Unfurling its wings of assurance

Just don't say anything anymore

Let silence heal

Let hope speak

In its resonant wordless gentle voice.

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