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Dr. Ronny Noor

Oh, Rohingya

He has made his weapons his gods.

When his weapons win he is defeated himself.

– Rabindranath Tagore

It's not your fault that you were born in
Rakhine: generations ago your ancestors
Were invited there by the Arakan kings.

But your seeds were planted long before
In the fruitful plains, whose lush growth
Sang the verses of Daulat Qazi and Alaol

While the opulent guests Sultan Shah Shuja
And family were rubbed out by the grasping
King, like the thousands in the 1942 pogrom.

And now you're robbed of your nation
Though the Bamars, Mons, Chins, Shans,
And Lashis have no more claims than you.

Stateless in your own land, lost between
Worlds and words, you flee from cruel
Monks and generals: a caravan of refugees.

The noble statue still in its lotus posture as
Ahimsa is tossed at the altar of the slaughter,
Heedless of compassion, conduct, or action:

Karuna ablaze in the torched homes.
Sila strangled in the devilry of rape.
Samma kammanta buried in mass graves.

The Middle Path is washed away by blood
Flowing freely down the Kaladan River,
Flooding the swamps and the rice fields,

For it's easy to bow and pray wrapped
In the saffron robe, but none becomes
Good unless the Path kisses the foot.

The world would be a better place without
Monks, Candide learned, and the stone statue
Will wake up when all walk the Middle Path.

A Mother's Lament

. . . give not one

heart the cause to grieve . . .

– Saadi

I'd borne you around for months out of love.
Since your birth there has been no dearth of love.

You crawled nimbly bursting into laughter
Like shattering glass, round face laced with love.

Gone so young. You could have been a firefly
For the lost nomads with flickers of love.

Before you blew yourself to dust, did you
Think of the years I'd showered you with love?

When you widowed wives and orphaned babies,
Sanctimonious wretch, you spurned God's love.

You have left me with a lifetime of pain.
That's your gift for your doting mother's love.

Across climates, colors, and continents,
Every mother's heart throbs with the same love.

You empty one mother's arms anywhere,

You deprive mothers everywhere of love.

You forgot the sage under Satan's spell:
You become God, said Rumi, when you love.

Paths abound as do names, but all paths lead
To the One we can reach only through love.

O Philistine! You tore live souls to shreds.
No God is there to embrace you with love.

Emerson: The Noble Sage

Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

I pore over the pages of your book,
Wisdom dripping from each phrase of your book.

A seeker who gave up the order, you
Ventured into yourself and not a book.

Shakespeare can't "be made by the study of
Shakespeare," for wisdom isn't taught by a book.

Your library was the *Jardin des Plantes*,
Where you saw the Morning Star in God's book.

Dogmas and cants? Divisions and groupings?
You shunned them for unity in your book.

The herd wasn't for you, nor was the high road.
You fashioned your own path outside a book.

To some you were an atheist, to others
A prophet, but you held fast to your book.

Your universal soul threads east and west,
North and south in the pages of your book.

The blood of all humans – O Noble Sage –
Flows through every artery of your book.



Dr. Ronny Noor

Born in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Dr. Ronny Noor is an award-winning professor, scholar, and writer in Texas, U.S.A. His essays, stories, poems, and book reviews have appeared in anthologies, journals, and newspapers around the world, including *Fresh Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, *Recent Studies in Rio Grande Valley History*, *World Literature Today*, *The Toronto Review*, *South Asian Review*, *Palo Alto Review*, *Commonwealth Novel in English*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *World Haiku Review*, *Kokako*, *Kitaab*, *FreeXpresSion*, *The Weekend Independent*, *The Daily Star*, and *Contemporary Literary Review India*. He is also the author of *Snake Dance in Berlin* (a novel), *Slice of Heaven and Other Essays* (a collection), and *Where Heaven Spreads Wide & Other Stories* (an anthology).

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