Postcolonial Ballads

My World

If the world were a woman
You’d rape her
wonder why she hated you so.
If she picked up a knife
to end your life
You’d shoot her,
claim self defence,
pay someone else
to launder the blood from your clothes.

If the world were your child
You’d school him
to be exactly like you.
And if he invoked
the spirits of art
with colour or word
that in gold could not be heard
You’d promptly reform him
Probably uniform him
in fatigues and a gun
say run boy run…
from your soul.

If the world were your book
You’d erase
all passages
that did not speak
flowers
on the altar of your power;
You’d blame all the victims
and help them pity themselves
Offer a buck or two
Prostitute their spirits
for another breath
You’d ensure
photographs of your symbols
were plastered everywhere.

If the world were a river
You’d deep-water bomb
the fish would all die,
bodies would rise,
Big Brother feasts,
Uncle Sam raises his glass
to the beast,
bread is broken
   to a token.
To hell with all others
   You have no sisters or brothers.

If the world were silent
   You’d hear…
Ah, but you don’t…
The sound of your voice
   without pause for reflection
on the infection
   You have spread for over 500 years.

Woman, child, book, river, silent;
This is my world
This is what you do
   to my strangers,
those I’ve known,
me
to communities uncontained
   by lines upon a page.

500+ years of struggle
against stupidity
   intolerance based on colour.
Now you find
   a new victim
repeated action
repeated infractions
decade
after
decade
You declare yourself
   Self-righteous democratic renegade.

If the world were yours…
   but then…
You already think that it is.

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