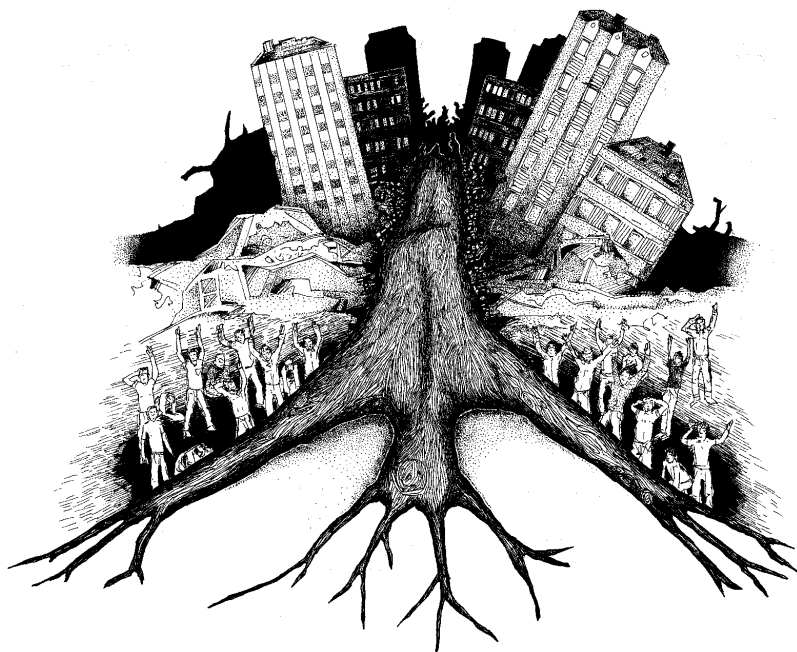


IF SOME POETREE FALLS IN THE MIDDLE OF SOCIETY...



Signs Of The Time

We are living in a world faced with war
On multiple mental and physical levels
We still got black wars against the police,
Crack wars in the streets,
Unemployment at its peak,
Overcrowded prison cells
In present-day hells,
Wars with Jews against Muslims
Over whether a created state Is-rael,
Wars over Wesson with Saddam,
American politicians arguing
Over the difference between smart and dirty bombs,
Instead of smart children in dirty schools

I'm feeling like it's me against the world
And I'm starting to get IL
Without even thinking of Kim Jong
Though North Korea does have the world
Turning up on its axis right now

With these signs of the time in mind
I wake up everyday with one burning question
And it takes me no fewer
Than 24 agonizing hours to answer:

Am I gonna die today?

See, I don't even bother watching my back anymore
Because I might get killed from the side today
Or maybe they'll finally get me n-u-clear
With bombs dropping from the sky today

Or maybe some religious fanatic
Will blow my behind up in a train station
After deciding he wants to get closer
To paradise today

Hell,
I gotta worry if an insane and depressed pilot,
Whose wife just cheated on him

And ran away with the kids
Is gonna fly today
Right into the 13th story of my building
Where I just called my wife
To tell her I got a rise in pay

Or am I gonna get hit on some *Driving While Black*
While driving on I-95 today?
Or maybe some crooked cop's gonna decide
That some no-good-nigga's mom
Is gonna cry today?
All this while wondering whether Bush
Is gonna play chess with our lives today?

Why today?

Instead of getting caught up in all that today,
I think I'm just gonna lose myself in the movement
This moment, I own it
Because it might be time to go
It only takes one shot for cops to release my soul
'Cause our community's stalked by filthy 5-0

So I've decided that I'm gonna fight today
Because there's always
Just enough time left to be right today
My kids are expecting for me to take a stand
Against wars in Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan today

So I gotta fight for this world to be safe for we
And this is personal
Because I don't want my child to see my face
Next to the definition of complacency

So I'm gonna fight this system
With all of my might today
Because it's true that tomorrow never dies
...But I might today

Living in a world where our young visionaries
Are becoming so hopeless
That they're losing their sight today
And so many perverted priests and pedophiles out there,

That I gotta worry about whether
My sons and daughters are gonna stay tight today

While Bush gives the rich tax cuts
And the poor ax cuts
On educational spending,
My students,
They're expecting for me to do what's right today

Looking down at the end of the tunnel,
I woke up seeing the light today
Because nations may blow up entire other nations
Out of spite today
And though I have my cell phone on,
I might not have enough time
To call my mom and say goodbye today

Y'all may say that I'm paranoid today,
But inhaling historical truths has got me ^{high} today
So now I'm looking for heroines and heroes
To help us stop our plight today

I'm even wondering if all this second-hand smoke
Finally gave me cancer today
So I dialed 9-1-1 for emergency assistance
But Bin Laden answered today

See,
I just walk around thinking that
Something's gonna get me
And I wonder why the hell you never ponder
If you're coming with me

So you have to forgive me for recounting
Some of the signs of the time
That we live in
Because since ignorance is bliss,
I know some of y'all forgot the hell we done been in

Got me wondering if God
Is really gonna be forgivin' for all of our sinnin'
Like killing in each other
In the name of religion

All I know is that I'm gonna keep on fighting
And never give in

So if I die before I lay my head to sleep today,
I just pray to God my soul to keep—today

Hell

It has been said that
We are living in the greatest nation on earth
It has even been said
That we are experiencing an economic prosperity
Never known to mankind

Most homes have TVs and PCs
And many believe they will get that
Pot of gold at the end of the American rainbow

But are we really living in the best of times
Or the worst of times?
Because through time it has become quite evident
That we have never lived in a paradise
Of heaven-sent proportions
For if you take portions of everyone's respective lives
To form one collective memory
You would soon see
That we are all living in hell

For what does economic affluence mean
To the man who lost his family
Because he fell in love
With Wall \$treet?

What do millions of dollars in reparations mean
To that Holocaust survivor
Who would happily spend her last dime
To see her family just one last time?

What about that African-American soldier
Slain in World War II at the hands of a Nazi
But whose family will not-see his name
In any of the history books?

And where is heaven
For that slave descendant
Who has yet to see his first dime
After 350 years of unpaid labor?

What does the chance at a great education
Mean though to that Latino

Who voluntary loses his language, culture, and history
In a vain attempt at assimilation?

Or what about that Native American
Who, in his own nation
Is refused his piece of the American pie
Because he arrived at the table without his reservation?

And what about that Korean employee
Working at McD's
Who can't even be proud of a war
Her people could have won
Because she lost her unarmed son at No-gu-ri?

And what about brothers
Given the death penalty
After already being sentenced
To life in hell as black men in America?

Is there really heaven on earth
For that immigrant-hired-help
Putting in maximum effort
For less than minimum wage?
Or that college-bound brother
Whose blood was smothered
In a case of road rage?

How can you sit there happily in peace
While little babies are crying and dying
Trapped in the Middle-East meets West
In a clash of civilizations,
While certain developing nations face starvation
Where children walk around
With bloated stomachs and emaciated bodies
While we walk proudly with
Bloated pockets and emaciated minds

Wearing our \$200 sweatsuits
From a sweatshop run in Thailand by Reebok
And being too busy
Watching DVDs on our laptops
That we can't hear the gats pop-poP-POP
That killed Amadou
Which, ironically stopped

Just before they reached 42
Which in the time of Horus or Heru
Meant divine judgment
You see it's coming!

So can you emerge from your matrix
Long enough to see
That there can be no rich without poor
And no peace without war?

That there is only a need
For ivy leagues
As long as community colleges
Strive to be respected by the mainstream?

That there can only be
Developing nations at the bottom,
As long as developed nations
Live lavishly at the top?
And that there would be
No billionaire record executives
Without negative lyrics in hip-hop?

The next time you look into the mirror
Stare deep into your eyes and realize
That the good life for you
Is nothing but someone else's hell
So it's really just a gigantic wishing well

So let those of us who have experienced success
Bless the world with our knowledge
And not live comfortably
On the edge of selfishness

For if you spend your entire life
Devoted to material wealth,
While drinking and smoking yourself
Into declining health

If you choose not to take the time
To serve those less fortunate than we
Then hell will be arriving at your door
Must faster than you can blink
And sooner than you think!

Proselytizing Penis

There was once an 11-year-old boy
Who believed in 3 things:
His mother, his grandmother, and God
Now his mother and grandmother he could see everyday
But he could not see God
And that is why he went to church
And it was at church that he met Father Pastor

Father Pastor told the boy
He could show him the way to God
All he had to do was meet him at his house
One day after church
And so the little boy went in search of God

The young boy was fascinated
By the way in which Father Pastor spoke the gospels
That he believed Father Pastor
Would actually show him the way

And so when Father Pastor said:
"Always be at church on Sunday,"
He obeyed

And when Father Pastor told him
To always listen to his Momma,
Who told him to always listen to his pastor,
He obeyed

And so when Father Pastor told him
To bend over and strip down butt-naked,
He obeyed

For 7 weeks, this young boy was reduced
To a walking rectum
By a sadistic, self-proclaimed, servant of the Lord
Who plastered him to the wall
As he sodomized any semblance
Of self-respect from his spine

This young boy
Already a gracious gift from God
Became a pastor's playmate in search of God

Believing this was the way to meet his creator

But,

After 7 weeks of unkept promises by this pornographic pastor,
After 7 weeks of a blood-soaked anus ,
That was always dry by the time the little boy got home,
The young boy grew suspicious of Pastor's proselytizing penis
Wondering why he always said "In God we trust"
When his eyes were only baptized with lust

And so **1** day during his repeated rape
The little boy had a "**2**nd" coming
You see it was his **3**rd eye telling him he had
Just **4** minutes to free himself-how? You see,
He had **5** centuries of sodomized slavery survivors
Saying to listen to his **6**th sense and free himself
From these **7** weeks of hell by having Father Pastor
Sentenced to **8** years
In a **9** x
10-prison cell

And so on the 7th day,
Father Pastor was a-rrested
But who the hell will save the mind
Of this emotionally scarred boy
Who has yet to see God?

Always count on Grandma to make things right
You see his grandma told him that
As long as he strived to be God-like
He would see little bits and pieces of God
Everyday when he wakes up and looks in the mirror

And so this boy,
Forever scarred by a perverted pastor
Who promised him the Messiah
Knows that he will see God,
When God says it is time

And though he can no longer walk straight
Because of his ordeal
He knows that if he walks
In a straight path with God
His soul will forever be healed

The Dietribe*

Hi
How are you?
Ever get that "not-so-thin" feeling?
Ever wish that you could look down and see your toes
Without having to bend halfway over?
Ever wake up wondering
How you can turn that 2-liter into a 6-pack
Without doing a sit-up?

Well you're not alone,
See millions of Americans in this *Fast Food Nation*
Are just like you
But have no fear
Science is on your side
Because now you can lose all the weight you want
And you don't even have to exercise

To hell with running, walking, bike riding and eating right
Because nowadays
They got pills, potions and diet programs
To perfectly keep us all looking tight

Hell,
Why get up and do a sit-up
When you can get one of those "Ab-Aways"
And vibrate all day
Until those pounds just wither away?

Or you can just try diets
Like Jenny Craig, Atkins, Jack LaLane or any other kind
As long you can stay in that McDonald's line
And out of the gym

Science got your back man
So if you wanna lose that fat man
Don't lose hope,
Drink more Coke
Because you'll never have to jump rope again
You don't have to do pull-ups,
Jog, or get in the ring and bob & weave

Damn it,
Real soon you won't even have to breathe
Because they're concocting new formulas
To suck that fat right out of you in one swoop!

Whooooooooosh!

It's better than liposuction!
You can go from the Blob
To Tyra Banks or Wesley Snipes
Get that body looking tight
Without ever having to eat right

No more need for fruits, vitamins,
And vegetables for dinner
Because new technology
Will keep you looking thinner

And for you poets out there
Do you know how I stay slim?
I've created my own new formula called "Poetrim"
I recite 5 poems a day but at key hours
And the excess weight just comes right off

But only if the poems are 3 minutes, 10 seconds tops
Otherwise I'm wasting my time
While augmenting my waste-line

* * * * *

I know I may sound like I'm joking,
But I'm really hoping
That we'll take better steps to improve our well-being
Because we're seeing that Americans are becoming larger
As the search for quick fixes reaches new heights

Because we wanna be able to watch 8 hours of TV a day
And ruin our sight,
Play-Stations all night,
Poison ourselves with mad cows and Sprite,
And still ask "How can I lose this cellulite?"

Is this not ludicrous?
Haven't you simply realized that you are what you eat
Or you eat what you are?

Didn't that little yellow cartoon germ tell you that
"You are what you swallow"
So stop eating crap like there's no tomorrow?
Isn't it that simple?

I've had children in my literature class
Literally eating frosting for breakfast
While many misguided Muslim children
Break-fast at Burger King
So they never truly purify themselves

For we live in a society
Where little kids with asthma have strokes
Because McDonald's is the new home-cooked meal
For breakfast and lunch
With Kentucky Fake Chickens for dinner
And leftover Sara Lee Cheesecake for dessert

It hurts for me to have to say all this
But too many of us are losing our work-out-ethic
Spending more money
So we can move less and eat more
While many of the world's poor
Eat one meal a day

See, this is all unnerving
Because here we're not even serving
Our kids what they need
So on both sides of the world
Our children are malnourished
Since the fast food industry uses
Subliminal criminal messages
To attract our children to trash,

And then we wonder why they have
Increasing rates of heart disease and diabetes
While our kids are still in their teens
Since the federal government
Feeds them the same crap in our schools

Oh God I ask you how have we become such fools
Intent on poisoning ourselves by eating hamburgers

Composed of 30 different cows
And we can't even drink 8 glasses of water a day

And now obesity is supposed to be genetic?
How pathetic are we becoming
When we search for ways
To blame our forefathers and foremothers
Instead of eating less potato chips, ice cream,
And movie popcorn with extra butter

The Fast food industry makes billions of dollars annually
Simply because we've lowered our health standards
While increasing our intake of food flavored
With chemicals and animal waste
Because in the production process
Our food loses its original taste

But I'm probably wasting my time
Since many of you have already decided to die early
By the way that you dine
But before you leave here to go to IHOP
I hope that you take heed of these words

Because the world's richest nation
Has become the most obese
And won't live long enough
To enjoy the fruits of its labor
Because fruit is no longer part of the diet

But if you want to join me
In this battle to save our lives
You must understand the words of my dietribe,
Eat right and exercise,
And we can reclaim our physical well-being
One pound at a time

**Partially inspired by Eric Schlosser's Fast-Food Nation*

My Inbox Is Boxing Me In

My inbox is boxing me in
The four corners of my computer screen
Have conspired with my keyboard
To coax me into a crusade of constant communication
Often with myself:

“Damn him for not writing me back”

“How can no one write me on my birthday?”

“Do I want to increase the size of my... wallet?”

“Do you REALLY think I want your stinkin' credit card?”

Actually, I do, but that's not the point!

My inbox is boxing me in
I know the computer is saying “You've got mail”
But it might as well be saying “You've got hell”
Because once I log on
I have a devil of a time trying to logoff

As they say
“Idle hands do the devil's work”
Hell,
Sometimes even until my damn fingers hurt

I'm soiling my soul
By continually clicking the “refresh” icon
As if a new e-mail will purify my psyche
While drawing me to new advertisements by Nike

But wait!
“You've got ma..hell!”

YES!
I knew someone cared!
Damn the fact that the newest e-mail
Is for an overdue credit card balance!
The fact that Visa believed
That I was important enough to write,

When NO ONE else wrote me in the past 3 minutes
...on my birthday,
Turns my hell to heaven
Until I click the refresh button again, of course

My inbox is boxing me in!
I've fallen victim to Satan's temptations
Risking consummation with computer viruses
After convincing myself that I really know "Melissa"
And cursing her for not writing me in so long

And as her birthday well-wishes
Corrupt my hard drive and soft feelings
Causing the files to erase
And my soul to become debased,
My fingers are left with no other recourse
But to write these words on paper

Paper?

If only people loved me,
And forced me to improve myself like my e-mail does,
I might have to kill someone

Tired Of Technology

Can you just follow me as I take you on this odyssey?
I'm tired of technology tapping me
On my shoulder
Everywhere I go like virtual Gestapo

You got cameras in dressing rooms,
And 3D cartoons that put Romper Room to shame
And then,
Like Mos Def said,
"I need ID to get ID"
Even though last time I checked
I still looked like me

You got felines that flush their crap
Down little cat toilets
And canines with collar-IDs
That holla whenever they get lost or detect fleas

But pardon me
As I get to the real bone I got
With this current technological progress
I'm talking about these cell phones

These cell phones are like cigarettes of the new millennium
Like cigarettes, they seem to come out of nowhere
When someone invades your air space
Not by smoking in your face but by yapping in your ear

And I fear like cigarettes
That excessive cell phone use
Can cause cancer
And it's no longer a rumor
Because research has shown that people got tumors
In the shapes of their cell phones
On the left side of their domes
Because that's the side
They always use to phone home

I know I use my cell phone too
But I got enough sense to know

That the person sitting next to me
Might not give a damn
To hear me telling my momma:

*"Hey Ma, I just got off of work at 2,
And I'm at the train station about to get on the #2
But oops! I gotta bend over and tie my shoe,
Like you taught me too,
And Momma—I LOVE YOU!"*

I mean damn!
I just do unto others as I want done to me
Because I know I could frankly care less
If you just broke up with Jeff or Princess
Or just lost a game of chess
Or fake right and go left on the basketball court
Just turn off the damn phone
And tell them when you get home!

For goodness sake,
Just the other day,
I saw a baby in a stroller
With hydraulic wheels & a TV in his hood
ON HIS CELL PHONE
And he was just chillin', talkin' about:

*"Yeah, I'm on my way to the daycare
So I'll holla when I get there"*

And I'm thinking:

*If you're old enough to talk on momma's Motorola,
Then what the hell you doin' in a stroller?*

And that same night, I went to the club
And I was trying to exchange numbers with this sister
Thinking she would be impressed
By my nice PhD pen
But she was looking all unimpressed
And sweet and calm
As she pulled out her palm pilot
And I was like "Damn!"
As I promptly preceded to pretend

That I left my palm pilot at home
But it was already too late
Because I looked like a scrub at the club
All because of this damn technology

* * * * *

Seriously my people,
This will indeed be a mind-monopolized, Microsoft millennium
With Pentium-processed people polluting the air
With their stoic stares
But does anyone care to know that technology neither brings
Nor is the mark of civilization?

Can't you see that countries
That are becoming more technologically progressive,
Are becoming more violent?

Can't you see that we have
More access to telecommunications,
But less community?

Can't you see that we have
More access to knowledge,
But our children are becoming dumber and dumber?

I'm teaching children
Who cannot find the entire continent of Africa
On a world map
While one student told me that Massachusetts
Was the capital of Boston

While the only Austin he knew was Stunning Steve
Because he was on MTV
Which stands for Much-Too-Violent society
Where brothers shoot each other in the 'hood with bazookas
And paratroopas dropping from their ghetto bird nests
Invading where I rest with their shady arrest warrants

I wish I could just trade these times for simpler times
When I didn't have to dial an area code to call next door
And tel-a-marketer
To stop trying to sell me crap from their stores
Or even worry about everyone knowing
What I bought at the grocery store

And I'm tired of Big Brother
Hovering over me on highways and byways
Taking my license plate as I travel state-to-state
Don't you get irate when you contemplate this nonsense?

I would definitely trade these times for simpler times
If it means I could have a bit of my privacy
And you're all blind not to see
That the entire world is becoming computerized like Cybertron
But I'm gonna use this key to Vector Sigma
And bring it back to the natural

So you should be alarmed but stay strong
In realizing that fast cars, cell phones and skyscrapers
Are not the signs of physical, spiritual and mental health
They're just the signs of how a materially-driven
Egocentric people build monuments to themselves

And leave legacies by cursing buildings with their names
Instead of being remembered by non-financial deeds
That could teach our children that monetary success,
Without maintaining their basic humanity is not what they need

I wish I could just stab all of this unnecessary technology
And make it digitally bleed to death
Because no matter how many fast cars you drive
And how many millions you save
By the time you die
You can't take any of that to your grave
When it's time to see if God will save your soul

But if you're not feeling what I'm saying
You don't have to condemn and bother me
Just take this message from a brother
Who's just tired of technology

Asante Sana

As you sit down to enjoy your Thanksgiving dinner,
I just wanted to say thank you
I want to thank you for turning your back on all Native
Americans

I watch you brothers and sisters
At the Cleveland Indians games
Proudly wearing your Cleveland Indians hats
In support of Native American persecution

You have become a mascot wearing the hat of a mascot
Proudly wearing the Indian grin with your Sambo smiles
Even at the Blackhawk's game you got the same old excuse—
No excuse
When you're watching the toss of the pigskin
At your Redskins game
Your excuses are always lame

Did our ancestors persevere
So that you could have the right to not be called niggas
But to call homosexuals faggots
And ALL aboriginal ethnic groups Indians?

You can't think that since you got the right to vote
And a historically lop-sided education
That all other genocides can be excused

Don't get it twisted
Saying you're one-quarter Cherokee
Doesn't excuse the ignorance

I don't understand how you,
A people who have
Suffered under a savage system of slavery and suppression
For half a millennium
Could have forgotten the annihilation
Of those whose blood was laid before you
And lies inside of you

You think you've arrived
Though you are still despised by those you aspire to emulate
You dine on your swine at this time for family
While Native families fight extinction
Like the bald eagle or the conscious black man

But I'll be damned if I stand for this sham of a holiday
That should be a holy day for the original American

How can you proudly eat your peach cobbler
In honor of civilization robbers
Who spread the legs of natives apart
Like the wings of a vibrant dove
And repeatedly raped them of their culture?

Well,
If you want to sip from the wine of another's sorrow,
I'll leave you be
But just remember, when you sleep with suppressive snakes
The next Thanksgiving dinner may be in honor of you and me

Progress

(Or)

Excuse Me, Do You Have The Time?

I'm walking

I look at a white man
He's scared of me

If I stand outside at 2 a.m.,
With 5 or 6 of my friends,
I'm breaking some law

I'm walking

My eyes fall upon a beautiful mansion
The only black people inside and out
Are mowing the lawn,
Or preparing dinner,
Or rocking someone else's baby to sleep

I look at the paper

An attack by Klansmen left 2 brothers dead
I look at the pictures in a well-known magazine
And the blacks inside,
They all look like clowns or thieves
America hates me

A white woman kills her babies,

And the nation blames me

A white man kills his wife,

And the nation is on a manhunt for me
Do they want to lynch me?

I want to tap that white woman on the shoulder

And ask her for the time

But she might cry "Help! He's trying to rape me!"

Now tell me,

Is this the 18th, 19th, 20th, or 21st century?

Privatizing Life

By the time you finish reading this,
17 children worldwide will have lost their lives
Because 8 children die a minute
In pursuit of potable water in order to survive
Partner that with the loss of husbands and wives
And you may end up cursing your eyes
Because you know these preventable mortalities will rise
Since water is now being privatized

Fed up with monopolies over diamonds,
Gold, coltan, and coal
Man is now on a mission
To monopolize Mother Nature's soul
No longer able to swim and drink
From our world's deltas and tributaries
Fees for life-giving water
Will have to be paid to evade the obituaries

Structural Adjustment Programs
Have become the equivalent of fasting
For our world's poorest governments
Must privatize water for loans everlasting
African Growth & Opportunity is being stunted
By acts most tyrannic
While corporations scramble for water rights
In a Berlin Conference-style panic

The rights of the human and earth
Are no longer relevant
For the right to profit
Now sets the precedent
Lower water standards and a depleted water supply
Are soon to follow
As Mother Earth becomes the liquid-deficient
Mars of tomorrow

From blood diamonds to "blood water,"
History is rearing its third eye
Forewarning us of the coming strife,
Which we can no longer deny
Civil wars will be waged

In the wanton pursuit of the world's water
Re-creating conflicts reminiscent
Of present-day patterns of slaughter

The developed world often acts
In the most undeveloped methods
By capitalizing on the lifeline
Of impoverished livelihoods
From protecting corporate interests
To interring corpses
The IFIs* have joined in the trademarking
Of our life-giving resources

But many of us will fight this battle
And that should now be apparent
For we won't allow the blue bloodline of Mother Earth
To become a patent
As man's oil of the new millennium
The poorest of the poor dangle their lives
Below profit's pendulum

Remaining inactive is an act in support of privatization
And the death of man
So the blood of the 17 children that just died
Also lies on your hands

**IFIs – International Financial Institutions*

What Does Development Aid Really Mean?*

What does development aid really mean?

Does it mean managing money to mobilize against HIV

Or driving through southern Sudan in an SUV?

Does it mean the improvement of life,

Since many join the development enterprise

To improve their lifestyle?

Does it mean giving 1/10 of 1% of your GNP

And having 1/3 of that funnel its way to those in need,

Since most of the aid goes to pay aid agency staff salary?

What does it mean?

Development aid is well-intentioned

But in this new millennium

We have to learn our lesson

Because I'd rather have no aid than slow aid or low aid

If it means that development agencies will give funds

To governments for pipelines and pesticides

But indirectly support a genocide

Or have we forgotten the extreme case of Rwanda,

Where 80% of development aid

Went to the pre-genocide government

Even though all of the signs

Of the genocide were in place

But agencies for aid

Paid it no mind as long as that well-water became potable

...or that fertilizer ferry became floatable

... or that minimal rise in literacy became notable

Just noticeable enough to give

Uplifting quotable statistics on reportbacks to donors

Please!

Misguided, top-down development

Enforces the politics of exclusion

Because in collusion with repressive governments,