

# The Ruin

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## I.

I weep like a fountain  
Over the Somali civil war.  
With pain and despair, I weep.  
The hatred, cruelty, and bigotry  
The loyalty to clans  
The evil that flowed from it.  
Brothers killing brothers.  
Brothers killing sisters.  
Neighbors bombing neighbors.

I weep for my people.  
I weep for the dead.  
The loss of family members.  
The maimed, the missing  
Who died running away from war.  
Died in the ocean  
And sea in search of safety.  
Died of malaria on their way  
Died walking long distances in search of water and food  
Killed by guns, bombs, and blasts.

I weep  
For the insane, the depressed  
The tortured, the traumatized  
The mad, the mourning  
The widowed, the wounded  
The raped, the robbed  
The looted, the limping  
The displaced, the demoralized  
The sick, the starving  
The hapless, the helpless  
The orphans, the oppressed – *Looma-ooye-yaasha*.

I weep and weep  
For our women, I weep,  
Suffering hell on earth  
Raped and forced  
To become captive wives  
Raising in chaos.  
Feeding children  
Air for breakfast  
Ashes for snack  
Lullaby for lunch and  
Sand for supper.

For our women, I weep.  
Endured the destruction  
Inhaled the smoke of war.  
Became deaf to  
The thunder of war  
Tasted the sourness  
Swallowed the pain of war  
Suffered internal injuries.  
Coughed up blood and pus  
Shaken by gravity of weapons  
Sucked up what was in their wombs.

I weep and weep  
For our children, I weep,  
Denied safety and schooling  
Denied food and medicine  
Denied a normal childhood  
Playing only with corpses.

Learning the sound of different guns and bombs  
Broken souls tarry toxic.  
No nestle with nurture  
No forgiveness  
No forgetting  
No one can undo what has been done.

I weep and weep  
For the Somali flag, I weep,  
Its azure field  
A shining star of hope at its center  
Five points for the five parts of Somaliland  
Divided by the colonial empires  
British and Italian Somaliland - our Somali Republic  
Ethiopian Somaliland - Ogadenia  
French Somaliland - Djibouti  
The Kenyan Somaliland – Northern Frontier District (NFD).

I weep  
For my flag, I weep  
You are a symbol of Somali unity.  
Bane of mini clan fiefdom flags  
Overshadow your boon and beauty  
Change your color, shape, and value.  
What will you look like in the future?  
What will become of you?  
We are not what you stood for.  
We don't deserve you.

I weep for my country of origin – The Ruin.  
For the abandoned buildings, I weep,  
The ruined schools, universities, and hospitals  
Upon which we were building our future.

I weep for the dark streets.  
The power was cut off.  
The lines were ripped.  
Dug up for copper  
Then sold to buy weapons.  
I even weep for the factories.  
The machines were sold  
Empty structures for an empty country.

For the forest and *indigenous* trees, I weep.  
The *Cadaad*, the *Caday*  
The *Damal*, the *Dhamas*  
The *Garas*, the *Galool*  
The *Qurac*, the *Qansax*  
The *Xarar*, the *Xamar*  
The *Yaaq*, the *Yicib*, I weep.

I weep  
For the mango trees, I weep.  
Thirty years it took for you to grow  
In a matter of minutes you disappeared.  
All cut down for charcoal.  
For export  
For Shisha.

Money for weapons  
Weapons to kill.  
I weep for the forest  
Earth's lungs hewed.  
Oh my Mango trees  
Your sweet fruits will be missed  
And the joy they bring.

I weep  
For the ocean, I weep.  
Beautiful and bountiful  
Calming and cooling  
Embracing us with your love.  
Now you have become a dumping ground  
For toxic wastes  
From around the world.  
There is no one to protect you.

I weep  
For the marine animals, I weep.  
The *Jaytar*, the *Jafane*  
The *Kabali*, the *Koombilo*  
The *Muungi*, the *Maleexaan*  
The *Shanlo*, the *Shiiraan*  
The *Qashaar*, the *Qalaanqasho*  
The *Yuumbi*, the *Yaxaas*  
Lying dead on the beaches.

I weep for the children  
In these polluted waters  
Swimming and becoming sick.  
My ocean has become a place of death.

I weep when I think about the warlords  
Creating monsters from a myriad of gangs  
The *Mooriyaan* and the *Jirri*  
Armed thugs and bandits  
Roaming the country  
Pillaging and plundering  
Raping and robbing

Displacing our people  
Killing them in cold blood  
Ruining our society  
Disharmonizing all diamond hearts  
Destroying our country.

I weep when I think about the warlords.  
Having no principle except stubbornness  
Having no solution for our country  
Having nothing except selfishness.  
The thought of you sickens me.  
I am glad you finally disappeared.

I weep,  
The merciless, militant, mad Mullahs  
Make me weep.  
The a la ninjas.  
An Evil and *Iblis*.  
Assassins of leaders  
The intellectuals, elders, and all  
The a la Talabaneese.  
The slaughters  
The slashed throats of innocents.

Oppressors of all women kind  
Made me weep.  
The a la *al-Qaeda*.  
Ignorant of Islam  
Void of all conventional wisdom.

I weep.  
The blood that flowed  
Seeping through the soil  
Contaminating the underground water  
People drink it from the wells  
Becoming vampires  
With guns, bombs, and blasts  
Merciless human beings  
Habitual killers.

I weep and weep  
October 14th, makes me weep.  
On a hot sunny afternoon.  
A white blast  
Dark smoke clouded the sky  
The earth shattered.  
More than an earthquake  
A volcano without lava  
Buildings disappeared, sinking.

Flames blazed  
Cars flew like airplanes  
Landing on top  
Of faraway buildings.  
The roofs winged  
Windows shattered  
Doors firewood flavor  
Dust and showering glasses.  
A dark dusted oil covered everywhere.

Heads landing in faraway.  
Distressed families  
Wandering among the rubble  
And wrecked vehicles  
Searching for their loved ones.  
Rumpling with pieces of flesh  
Over-burned flesh  
Children holding a leg  
Perceived as their mother's.

A lone braceleted arm  
Of a once beautiful young lady.  
Unidentifiable bodies  
Burned to the bone.  
An acrid revolting smell  
Haunts my dreams  
For the years to come.  
Four square miles vanished  
Stripped from garments.

A truck full of sugar  
Slowly burning sugar  
Melting sugar smell mixed  
With rancid smell.  
Around the scattered flesh  
Over six hundred innocent souls  
Vanished for no reason and maimed hundreds.  
Groans and desperate cries echoed  
Like the doomsday.

People burned to ashes.  
But petite Asha under collapsed concrete  
Grabbed a booted leg of passerby  
He jumped like a cheetah with a force  
And thrown her body on the other side.  
Glanced at her dusted face  
"I thought you were a ghost."  
For the 2017 *Soobe* explosion, I weep,  
The *Hiroshima* of Somalia.

I weep and weep.  
But I am tired of weeping.  
Tired of cyclic evil souls.  
Decades of weeping  
Dried up the well.  
No heart and Will to weep.  
The fountain is void.  
I am tired of weeping.  
I can weep no more.



**II.**

Where are the Somali leaders?  
Don't we have trailblazers?  
Where are the Somali intellectuals?  
Don't we have gurus?  
Where are the Somali people?  
Don't we have heroes and sheroes?

Where is the world?  
Aren't we part of the globe?  
Where are the countries?  
Aren't we a country?  
Where are the people?  
Aren't we human beings?

Where is the United Nations?  
Aren't we a member of the U.N.?  
Where are the Africans?  
Aren't we Africans?  
Where is the Horn?  
Aren't we part of the Horn of Africa?

Why have we been abandoned?  
When we have been crying for help!

Oh, our men!  
Why are we ruined?  
Why have our cries not been heard?  
Why are our voices muted?  
Why does our future seem so gloomy?

We had a country and a home.  
Waging war and disaster  
Turning us into single mothers and fathers.  
Orphans and homeless children.  
Making us refugees scattered around the world.

Abandoning us for greed and power  
Abandoning us for ego  
Abandoning us for clan and self-interest.  
Abandoning us for *Khat*.  
Abandoning us for money.

Agreeing to do nothing more than fight  
Thinking that one clan is better than the other.  
Why not forgive and forget?  
Why not reconcile  
And commit to peace?

Oh, my fellow Somalis!  
Dispersed we are around the world  
Crying about the losses of loved ones,  
Living the sorrows of not having seen them for the longest time.

Feeling guilt for living in peaceful countries  
And not being able to do anything about our own.  
Sacrificing our lives.  
And bearing the burden of family responsibilities.

What has been done that has not doomed us all?  
What part of this fatal feud have you been pregnant with?  
Were you the clan defender donating money  
Or supporting the mad Mullahs?

Buying weapons to fight against another clan  
Whittling the knives for the weak to kill  
Keeping violence alive  
Instead of standing up for what is right – peace?

Denouncing worm warlords  
And mad Mullahs of wheel death  
Who are corralling us in caves  
That could consume the core of us.

Rebuilding our country.  
Rejuvenating our society.  
And making a difference everyday, and  
In any way we can.

**III.**

Oh, our women!  
Suffering every day.  
Taking the burden on your shoulders  
Like all women of Africa  
You are the backbone of the family.

Supporting family members everywhere diligently  
Breadwinners and homemakers  
In home and in foreign lands  
Where you know not the language  
Let alone culture and norms.

Becoming the lifeline of families  
Caring for the ailing  
Nurturing the children  
Resilient like rock  
Towered and exuded resilience.

You are the only glue that is holding us together  
But you need to come together  
You need to become the leaders  
You are the beacon of hope  
Because you are the only hope.

Oh, our youth!  
You are the beacon of hope.  
Although you don't live in the same country,  
Speak the same language  
Or share the same culture  
You are the beacon of hope.

You are Somalis regardless of where you are  
Or where you were born.  
Learn your roots, spirituality, and values  
Learn your language and culture  
Connect to one another.  
You are the beacon of hope.

Concentrate on education  
And avoid crime and violence  
You are our greatest natural resources  
You are the future leaders  
Maybe you can do better than us.  
You are the beacon of hope.

When I left decades ago  
Somalia was beautiful!  
I remember childhood in my city of *Eldher*  
Drinking fresh milk and eating spicy baked *dhaylo*  
Sweetened and soaked with lots of love.  
Growing up in *Waberi*, Mogadishu.  
Dipping *Bajiye* with *Basbaas*  
Eating unripe green mangos  
Rubbed with salt and sprinkled with lime juice.  
Eating Friday picnic lunches at *Jungle*.

Going to *Liido* beach  
Looking at the horizons  
Where the blue Indian Ocean and the sky meet  
Watching the waves on the blue water  
A moving light  
Disappearing and reborn at the same time.  
The buildings overlooking the beach.  
Walking in Downtown Mogadishu  
From the *ex-parliament* to *Shabeele*  
Having *mango* ice cream in *Jumba Jalaato*.

Touring the dams of the river that divides *Afgooye*.  
Visiting orchards in *Janaale*.  
Swimming the exotic beach of *Warsheikh*.  
Enjoying the gorgeous gardens of *Snai*  
Stopping at the *Shabeele* River in *Jawhar*  
Standing on the river bank  
Seeing the tree shadows on the water  
Saluting a silicone-like shadow  
Sending a reflection of a tree  
Back from the bottom.

Our people were hospitable  
Kind, caring, and loving  
Sharing and welcoming strangers.  
Those were my glorious days.

When I returned after the civil war.  
Downtown Mogadishu was a ghost town  
That even cars avoided.  
The *Snai* sugar cane factory had disappeared  
Weeds replaced its once beautiful gardens.  
I saw a ruined country  
And a collapsed society.

In a paradise lost  
The people are still hopeful  
But they are helpless and hurting.  
I felt like a stranger amongst my own people  
And in the soil of my motherland.  
What happened to the lore of the culture I was raised in?  
What happened to the people I grew among?

O peace!  
Where are you?  
I long for peace and stability  
I long for tranquility.  
I envision a disaster-free Somalia  
I envision peaceful Somalia  
I envision a cure for clannism  
I envision Somalis united for peace  
I envision peace and reconciliation  
I envision peace and love  
I envision a democracy.

I envision total human rights  
I envision environmental protection and sustainability  
I envision a world without war, famine, and disaster  
I envision a cure for COVID-19  
I envision a complete ecosystem  
I envision peace in the Horn of Africa  
I envision peace around the world.  
I envision peace in Somalia  
I envision Somalia rising like a phoenix  
From the flames of fighting  
I envision overt, true peace.

**Acknowledgement:** I am dedicating this poem to my nephew, Abdulaziz Mohamud Mohamed (Shine Talbert), and his comrades who have been missing since boarding a boat from Libya to Italy in January, 2003; to all the people who died in search of safety and better lives; to my sister Hawa-Lul Mohamed Hassan who was killed in 1991 during the civil war because of her clan; and to the thousands of others, and the Somali people who are suffering because of this foolish conflict.