

Book I : HYMNS

*** MOTHERSONGS ***



earth tears

(7) *World-sorrow*

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We must ourselves burn, to know the agony of fire.



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Ladies and gentlemen, first-world globe-trotters and back-packers : As you contemplate your next holiday destination : Consider for a change an experience in africa, in south america, in asia; or even a heartland of one of your own cities. You may need to steady your mind a little, pack your own toilet paper, some antibiotics for security, learn how to watch your back. You could consider by-passing the hilton and the royal, and take a back street instead to the old commercial hotel, or a tatty pension. You can risk the markets, the hawkers, the hookers, the thieves, the snotty kids and break-down taxis, and the roads all wrong on the map.

And go to see some of the greatest people of the world, and the great creatures and plants of their great land-forms.

We can spend our up-market blue-chip dollars on their tottering bus services, swallow back our snorts at the colour of their coffee, choke down our distaste for their smelly fish markets, our complaints about the hours we had to wait for jam-packed trains (as they do, every day), the queues at barricaded bank tellers, the sight of unsightly and unsighted beggars, the people worn old with fourteen-hour work days. And talk, and see, and Recognise the universal ailments of Love : the parents sick with worry for their children, the passionate graffiti calls for peace, the lone muttering of aged orphans.

(Today, about 15,000 kids under five die of starvation *daily*: over 3 million each year. And ten per cent of our human brothers and sisters live in perpetual hunger.)

We can take a third world holiday of absurdly cheap services, handcrafts, spectacular landscapes, exploratory journeys; and Realise the imperial horsepower of our exclusive blue-chip currencies, the devaluation of their own by daily decree; our harsh power to buy a man's week's work with a single modest note, to buy a single serviced lunch worth clothes and warmth for all his family. (I've met him: third world zulu air traffic controller, whizz-kid juggler at a tired console: paid like a strawberry-picker.)

And we can take a journey deep into the more shadowed alleys of our own nation, too, with straight gaze and open heart, and undertake to See. We will see and hear and feel the same world-story, the tale of dark pains and bright satisfactions, of hollows and spikes and pinnacles and pits.

And meet with myriad other earnest searching travellers, ever growing numbers of passionate people with illuminated eyes, muscled with their effort, toughening with their fearful growing knowledge.

*And feel at last the Ache sink through the body, and deeper,
right into the Heart;*

*where the traveller can Experience at last
the exhaustion of our kindred peoples,*

*their love,
their dedication,
their Ordeal.*

*And Cry at last for the sickness, the suffering,
the world-wide shame:*

Cry for World Iniquity.

Cry for World Injustice.



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