

## My Poetic Inquiry

### Introduction

My reflection is an ongoing inquiry; a personal response through poetry to myriad of global issues with local realities that are neither peculiar nor particular to one location, but the thought process is self-imposed and inspired by a series of stories and life's struggles. The concerns raised in this ongoing inquiry is no one's identity but we can identify with it because it forms and shapes our identities, personalities, relationships and daily pursuits. While I invite readers to make self-meanings and interpretations of these verses, I would love to give a background to provide a sort of context that inspired these three short poems.

As a student, artist, theatre practitioner and a researcher who works among different communities – marginalized and un-marginalized, I consciously embrace stories that mirror the past, the present and perhaps provide lens into the future. Each story is carefully hidden, guarded and treasured in my heart. For instance, I cherish every conversation I have had– with bus drivers, hawkers, traders, students, strangers, both known and unknown. At times, I situate myself in the context of some experiences while many experiences I cannot because it happened to the Other – them not me.

Furthermore, my research primarily focuses on refugees, internally displaced persons and theatre for social change. I explore diverse stories for different purposes – fun, dialogue, learning, relationship and social justice etc. I have seen the power of stories and how it can transform or change someone's perspective, decision and pursuit. I ponder on different stories and the need to create space for people's stories to bring about desired change because when we empathize, I think it gives wholeness to our thought. Although these poems are written in my words, the inspiration came from different communities that I have worked with – senior homes, refugee youths, immigrant workers, displaced persons, undocumented migrants and students. I have written these poems to honour their stories, burdens, words, perspectives and hopes. Therefore, as you read these short poems, I invite you to constantly remember that I am on an inquiry, my thought reflect my present position and it is influenced by my practice.

**With/Without...**

Power without responsibility  
Knowledge without wisdom  
Strength without direction  
Pleasure without conscience

Is

Zeal in ignorance  
Sugar-coated with brief certainty.  
Its carrier can turn the world upside.

Anarchy. Disorder. Inhumane.

I know the story of a man who had everything  
But was empty;  
Everything, but gained nothing

Vision devoid of mission  
Life lived without love  
Passion without purpose  
Wealth without work

Is

Perspective out of control.  
Lost in the voyage to no site  
But used deceit, chaos and coax to fool our sights.

Immaturity. Naivety. Curiosity.

I am the character that hold everything  
Yet nothing  
Dust gone dead – cold dead!

Commerce without morality  
Politics without discipline  
Pursuit without patience  
Religion without sacrifice  
Science without humanity

Results

In the world's burden  
That gives us loss and pain  
With undying strength to lose sight  
Of life's relevant perspective, because of

What we love most. What we want most.

Is it not?

I hope between our words and the world;  
Behind these burns and thorns  
Will arise

Life. Love. Light.

**A call**

Though no one may know the sorrow within,  
Your face maybe radiant;  
Glittering with smiles and bright.  
But you know when you are broken within;  
When things fall apart,  
And the centre can no longer hold,  
When peace within is gone,  
And you are troubled, confused and raged within.

Amidst troublesome noises of every day  
There's always distinct still voice within  
That speaks calm even in silence  
A candle that lights the way  
A compass for direction

When our voyage ship meets with a stormy sea  
And the tide turns us to capsize  
When we are rough, wrestling with toughs  
But we paint our faces in bright colours  
Though ocean roar within.

Your world seems whole  
But within you lie pieces  
That has forgotten the taste of tender  
And care...

Yet we hide, but suffer  
Eat bread and bullet  
Groan in silence  
Pregnant with pain and hate

Perhaps it's done with good intention  
'I choose not to burden others'  
'Take life responsibility for my life'  
And reasons are endless...

'Is it a generation of hate?'  
'Or an intellectual capacity of greed?'  
Perhaps discord sown with words and deeds?  
For deceit has grown old and bold in human's heart

But it takes love to kill hate  
A sincere empathy; open arms to know what's within  
Because it's a call to embrace.

**Unanswered Queries**

The world is wounded.  
Ruptured. Fractured. Captured  
In chains and waste.

This earth is barren  
Tortured. Vulture. No nurture  
Raped and stripped naked.

A vacuum of sort  
Broken into pieces  
Bone. Thorn. Burnt.

Green without grin  
Lemonade. Grenade. Brigade  
In yards and yacht.

Why break the bone yet cry for a fix?  
Why kill to gather to bury?  
Why snuff the light and in search of a candle?