

A HISTORY OF PROTEST IN MY LIFE

David Sparenberg

I did not do enough,
although it was in my heart.
I wanted to enjoy
the warmth of life
more than to put out
the fires of war.

I protested
but I did not sacrifice.
I marched
while the innocent and
guilty alike
were burned by death from
the sky.

Maybe if that child in
Vietnam
had not died of napalm,
the children of Iraq would
not now be
dying in my name?

Being an American,
I chose the ease of
what we call freedom.
I said, "No,"
but I did not make myself
heard in
the power of compassionate
denouncement. I said
"Yes,"
but not always to otherness
and not with the strength
and
reverence of beatitude.

When I die
war will not have
left the lovely Earth and
should I come back in
the perfume of a flower,
likely
the petals will be
stained with freshly fallen
blood.

What child's cheek
may yet come to paint with
pain the soft white of the
lily? What
lust may yet harvest
the agony of thorns,
while crushing the ecstasy
of roses?

I did not do enough,
although I had set out
to make a monument of
War No More.

There is my failure.
The teeming world of
tears that so easily tips
into fear and madness
does not need
these words alone. Rather,
a communion
where none are absent.
Where
there can be anger as
an emotional bubble but
not enemies and
not crimes of hate.

It is said that
freedom is not free;
but it is
death that is made
wholesale.
The axiom is propaganda.
Peace
requires the greater
vulnerability.

I have done some:
having spoken
when others remained
silent; having
stepped up on occasion,
while others withdrew. But
I have
not done enough. I know
this,
so do you.

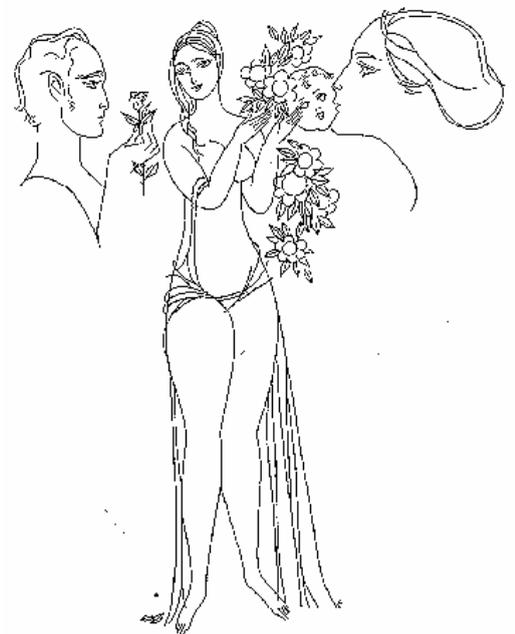
That yet another generation
must
plant the seeds of healing I
have dreamed of and they,
labor for the season
I have not known.

Yet have I read, in
visions of prophecy,

that a tree will in twilight
later grow at the center of
the circle of life; the

weapons of fratricide be
beaten down, the vineyards
filled
with the royalty of angels.
Robins
singing and butterflies,
not boy-men crying
for their mothers' mercy.

Rather,
to dance in that round in
footprints of a loving God!
To stand in prayer
blessed beneath that
earthly bough.
When?



Drawing: Evgueni Bosyatski