

POEMS

Of Borders

The DMZ was once called "the scariest place in the world"...
– GlobalPost

Under this part of the sky,
the breeze still smells
of the hermit's breath.

"No fog today,"
says the guide
with a nasty smirk.
He crows as if
misery didn't exist
on our side of the world,
"Life over there
must be awfully
hard."
But no matter:

From the observatory,
I imagine them—
spawns of revolution—
sauntering into farms or
camps, with faces
furrowed by isolation.
bodies inured
to imperialist blockades,
marching to heroic cadence.

Beyond the Rimjin, a child could be
gleefully tugging at a toy truck
or walking in the square
while holding
her father's hand in the shadow
of pennants pointing
eastward.

(Elsewhere
on the planet,
another child could be dying
of hunger on the tiled floor
of a city underpass.)

Beyond the border, justice
is no mere charity, no mere pittance
for migrant peons,
no empty credo tossed around
like promises made
by politicians
in my woebegone
land.

There, for all the scare,
the minjung
may be holding up
their well-
deserved part of
the sky.

— *Noel Christian MORATILLA*

About the Author

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