Poetry

A Bridge of Peace

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree,
and none shall make them afraid." (The Bible, Micah, 4)

"He who walks with peace – walk with him!" (The Koran, Sura 48)

My Arab sister,
Let us build a sturdy bridge
Form your olive world to mine,
From my orange world to yours,
Above the boiling pain
Of acid rain prejudice -
And hold human hands high
Full of free stars
Of twinkling peace

I do not want to be your oppressor
You do not want to be my oppressor,
Or your jailer
Or my jailer,
We do not want to make each other afraid
Under our vines
And under our fig trees
Blossoming on a silvered horizon
Above the bruising and the bleeding
Of Poison gases and scuds.

So, my Arab sister,
Let us build a bridge of
Jasmine understanding
Where each shall sit with her baby
Under her vine and under her fig tree -
And none shall make them afraid
AND NONE SHALL MAKE THEM AFRAID.

Cosmic Woman

They tell us
you were first born
in warm ocean womb
caressed by sun fingers -
daughter perhaps
of the stormy affair
of two unruly atoms in love
maddened by the solitude
of eternal rounds
in the steppes of times

And your children,
lively descendants
of their stellar nucleus mother
dropped from the sky
in depths of ocean belly,
born of green and brown seaweed
and the laughs and cries
of a blue bacteria

Cosmic woman,
when you chose earth
as home for your vast roots
at the beginning
of the great human family,
it was for life —
not for death!

Cosmic woman,
you, who were born of the nucleus,
from deadly nuclear mushroom -
save your chosen planet
save your children!

Peace is a Woman

How do you know
peace is a woman?
I know, for
I met her yesterday
on my winding way
to the world's fare.
She had such a sorrowful face
just like a golden flower faded
before her prime.

I asked her why
she was so sad?
She told me her baby
was killed in Auschwitz,
her daughter in Hiroshima
and her sons in Vietnam,
Ireland, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine,
Bosnia, Rwanda and Chechnya.

All the rest of her children, she said,
are on the nuclear
black-list of the dead ,
all the rest, unless
the whole world understands —
that peace is a woman.

A thousand candles then lit
in her starry eyes, and I saw -
Peace is indeed a pregnant woman,
Peace is a mother.

Eve's Defence

You didn't have to accept
That shiny juicy apple
Did you Adam dear?

Please remove those
Musty fig leaves
From your memory and ears
And remember Adam dear,
You were created
From mere earth,
Whereas I was sculpted
From a much finer substance
Finer than ivory
Finer than gold.

In the rush of your
Heart's blood
In the throbbing of your temples
Remember Adam dear -
I was created
From pure human bone

Your strong rib-bone
Became me - Eve
Mother of Life.

Always remember
Dearest Adam
Free, indepedent Eve
Is - You.

Palm Curve

Cuddled in the heart of your hand,
soft hand, warm hand,
I do not feel the meaningless drops
of life drizzling,
do not hear its jackal-thunder
nor see its lynx-lightning
in the dark.

And if the world should burst tonight
in a giant mushroom flame,
I would not notice -
Snuggled in the nook
of your gentle palm
where I belong,
it seems I may exist
forever.

I Want to Kill You War

I want to kill you war, forever,
not like a phoenix, that always comes back
I want to kill you war
and I don't know how
and I don't know why
all the people of the world
don't join hands
to kill you war —
you the greatest killer
of them all!

The governors of the world
Go on feeding your fat belly
With fresh soldiers
And nuclear arms,
With blurring eyes
They only know how to hang
The murderers of the one or the two
But not you,
You, the greatest murderer of them all.

After the carnage the priest said
"we are all responsible."
After the carnage the Sheikh said
"we all remain brothers."
After the carnage the Rabbi said
"we can stop it if we choose."
The priest and the sheikh and the Rabbi
Raise up their hands and look up to the sky.

The Women peace marchers
Take hold of the slab of marble
On which is inscribed "We want to live not die!" -
And carry it away under the whizzing bullets
Like a corpse - but still warm, still alive.

– Ada Aharoni*

* *Born in Cairo, Egypt, and living in Haifa, Israel, Professor Aharoni is an international poet and novelist. She has published 29 books and is recipient of several prizes, including the British Council Poetry Prize, and the Temoignage Prize 2015 (Paris). Her Poetry Collection: RARE FLOWER, (Dignity Press, USA), was nominated for the Nobel Prize. She is President and Director of IFLAC: International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace.*