

THE UNSEEN VULTURE

By Bethel Aklilu

ONE, two, three, four.
Ten, twelve minutes or more?
How long have you been lying?
Little girl!
How long have you been crying?

D' you know that land is dry?
D' you know food's scarce?
D' you know there's not enough?
And wars are all around you?

Men fight for land, for oil, and power!
Nobody fights for you.



A vulture lurks behind you
Waiting for you to die.
You cry devoid of hope
No one comes to help

A greater vulture
Encompasses the globe
Savouring misery and calamity

Food security?
A thing of the past.
Not available.
No access.
Poor quality.
Unsafe.

Evil stalks...

In Guatemala it hears
Women crying
Caught in nets of violence,
Femicide, fear
And Aboriginal suffering

Evil rejoices...

In the lust for power
Consuming mankind.
Zimbardo tells it well.

Evil applauds...

The insatiable desires
Of those in power
Eroding nations
Into mire

Evil enjoyed...

Haiti shaking
Cholera's hand taking
Children, women and men.
The health system failed.

Health systems can't withstand
The weight of violent hands:
Poor funding
Poor access
And poor policies
Affect all families.

Evil revels...

In the unethical development
Of mining and forestry
Exploiting the Peruvians'
Land and wellbeing.

Evil ignores...

Environmental injustice
Poisoning water, land and air.
The poor, the weak and the voiceless
Are all in despair.

Climate change brings
Floods, droughts and fire
Ocean islanders
Are first to suffer

BUT humanity has the ammo
To defy the vulture's shadow
The fight will never cease
For the right to health and peace

Civil society and private business
Take a stand for nutritious subsistence.
Devising new ways to fight food insecurity
Through programs at school and new food
technology

Guatemalans are speaking out
NGOs and Community Champions
Are on the ground.
Resiliency reigns.
There is no doubt
Both psychosocial and legal
Reforms abound.

Research is much more than just vanity
It must serve all of humanity.
"Just war" should be the last resort
When peace cannot be found in court.

Although Haiti is "on the bench"
New victories lie ahead.
Soon health systems
Will be restored
With help from far and wide.

Good governance and
Capacity building
Make "health for all"^a
A right we can achieve

Despite his murder in Peru
Edwin Chota's struggle continues
To protect land, and health and peace.

Key solutions for our salvation
Include climate change adaptation,
Binding international resolutions
And thousands marching for a revolution.

Health is more than biology
It's social, mental and spiritual harmony.
The social determinants of health are at play
Gender, race and SES^b also have a say

Peace goes beyond conflict resolution.
It is forgiveness, trust and reconciliation.
Peace goes beyond an argument won.
Health and peace are truly one.

All of this is meant to say
The greater vulture won't have its way.
The fight for our rights won't cease;
Peace is health and health is peace.