

God is Dead

I knew God. I sat with him at the dinner table before my meals. Every night, I presented him a towel to rest his knees on as I laid out my dreams and confessed my sins. Every so often, I walked with him to school and he used to whisper the right answers to me whenever I felt so nervous, I could hardly think for myself. And on Friday mornings, I dressed to impress him, with every melody sung for him or rather with him depending on the kind of mood I was in. But that was back then. Those days are gone with the dust of history.

I was to turn six the next day. He never showed up on that night. Perhaps because it was not a clear night, He did mostly show up on clear nights. I had debated with myself as I laid out a towel underneath my bed and waited. I looked through my window and the sky had been overshadowed by the grime of vengeful souls with sounds of screeching bullets accompanied by high-pitched cries. The deafening rapture of bombs sung in tune and I decided that He was no longer with me. He was dead. God was dead. He had been on his way to my house like he always did. And He had been caught in a crossfire.

“We have to leave now!” I heard my father argue with my mother. My bedroom door was clumsily forced opened and standing at the threshold was my mother. I stared at her with horror, she returned the gaze with shaken comfort. “Come, gather around with your siblings.” She said after she managed to compose herself and the terror on her face took cover like a boxer’s exhaustion. I walked towards her into the living room. “The president is dead. He was assassinated. The war has begun. The rebels have taken over.” A man in the radio spoke

swiftly and at hardship. I had never been in a war, I thought. I wanted to walk to my father, ask him if war was like what my brother and I had. Those fights always ended up with one of us hurt but his face was plastered in anguish. “You know they are coming for us next,” he said with all the seriousness a man of his age could master.

A piercing sound ran across the room and suddenly the ground shook. The room was suddenly filled with coal dust and heavy warmth. I looked around me and I saw my uncle. Blood rinsed heavily in his mouth, while he choked and shivered. I tried to scream but I could hardly let my voice out. I thought of God. And if He had been as scared as my uncle seemed. I wondered if his last thoughts were of me as my thoughts were of him.

No sooner had I realized it than I was on top of a pick-up truck. I could only recognize my sister’s face from the dozen other strange faces. I looked beyond, and lifeless bodies scattered like decaying leaves in a cornfield. I tried to take it all in. So, I held my breath then began to recall on the face of God. Maybe I could recognize him from the motionless figures that spilled color on the barren landscapes along the streets. I had to make sure that he was indeed dead. I was not leaving him behind. To my dismay, his face resembled everything I laid my eyes upon.

Thereafter, I chose to shut my eyes. To feel rather than see. After all, Mother always told me that “the soul saw what the eyes could not”. Then suddenly another intrusive ringing sound came humming its way along the road and horrendous images collapsed under the weight of my world.

From that day I still think of God. But He is no longer the clear night sky that seemed to ooze with peace rather images of lifeless bodies. That's why I try not to think of him that much.

By Sandra Hortence