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Inadequate, Essential Gestures

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INADEQUATE, ESSENTIAL GESTURES

Sharon K. Hom

Somewhere

A young girl is
repeatedly raped
by soldiers in a forest clearing
throughout the afternoon's violations

She sings

hymns prayers
for mercy for peace for the end
that finally comes as machetes
silence her singing
still echoing

Somewhere

the last 650 mountain gorillas
helpless as the circle
of poachers, soldiers closes in
their eyes on the trophy-heads and hands
gentle meat of human food
nowhere to hide
in a bleeding land

Somewhere

A bitter widow
hangs a starved bruised dog
casualties of retreating para-military violence
justice for justice
she intones under her breath

Here, now

after the floods and hurricane winds
against the harsh sunlight
I patiently brush Bo-Bo and Ulysses
distant cousins of the dying
kit foxes, Bengali tigers, sleek panthers
I clean my house
wash the laundry
write my checks

to save the diminishing pieces
of the world that remain

Here, still
Noboku sings
 filling the emptiness
 drawing me into
 a circle
 a circle of all relations
reminding me
that *a single stone*
ripples far
far out beyond

Here, still
across impoverished
barbed wire borders
 re-presenting our clients
 we petition for human scraps
 at the immigration table
claiming an as yet
unimagined citizenship

Not such stuff as dreams are made of

Only
 the inadequate
 essential gestures
 of a life