

## WHEN THE EARTH LEARNS OUR NAMES AGAIN

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There are towns where smoke wakes before dawn,  
where mothers rock air because no child answers.  
The radio tells us it was another clash,  
as if grief were a neighbour we should now ignore.

A boy walks through what was once his home,  
a tin of milk in one hand, a goat bleating behind him.  
He speaks to the dust as though it were kin,  
for the dust is all he has left that listens.

In the city, the rich hang curtains against the cries.  
They say, "Peace will come," while the gutters run red.  
The anthem still plays in classrooms without roofs.  
Even the chalk squeaks like a scream that forgot its name.

We count our dead in silence now,  
so often that sorrow has become an accent.  
Still, someone lights a candle on a cracked windowsill,  
and for one trembling moment, the night softens.

If this soil must keep our stories,  
may it speak them aloud when the judges are asleep.  
May it whisper to the unborn:  
that we were wounded, but we did not vanish;  
that even in ashes, we kept our pulse.