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**Author**

Teklu, Ararat Iyob

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## POETRY

Four Poems by Ararat Iyob Teklu

### Walking Out

Jagged rocks bit my feet  
Sharp thorns scratched my forehead  
Bloody lines run out of soft skin  
Rivers and streams  
Slapped wet waves on me  
With the dizziness of the slopes  
The First time I knew  
that the sun could be  
very hot on my back.

### Waiting Echoes

In the hearth  
stands a wooden pole  
Warmth has faded  
the old surround it now.

Their eyes search corners  
where small feet stood once  
No laughing faces  
Traces are lost forever

Their waiting  
echo in the dark  
They look and remain silent  
memories of yester-year  
deep in their souls

## The Cactus Village

Yellow flowers on top of mud huts  
paths paved through years  
trod on by bare feet  
streaks of line across  
cactus and brown fences  
surrounded by bare rocks.

At sunset a shepherd passes  
tiny beneath the shadow  
of dust following home-coming cattle  
his song clear and loud  
and the swinging tails.

In the evening gourds filled with milk  
pass silently in the dark  
to the candle lighted windows  
while the villagers gather around the fire  
listening to stories of yesterday.

An old banda remembers  
a special day in '41  
when he and his brother  
met two fleeing Italians  
on a narrow gorge near a river  
asking a way to safety

While being guided across  
they talk stepping on the wilderness  
hands holding their rifles tight  
their "white" eyes gleaming  
with anticipation  
The old warrior was silent.

A young boy continued to listen  
when there was no more  
he asks, "why are you all quiet?  
did these Italians get to safety?"  
The old banda looks at the fire  
shakes his head slowly  
"no, my child, you see, I understood Italian."

## A Dew In The Desert

A nomad child looks up  
 As the noise breaks the quiet.  
 He embraces his kid  
 its fur coat soft and warm.

A nomadic caravan traces its destiny  
 under the burning sun  
 dusty winds blow fear in the sky.

Camels step in the sand  
 tell a never ending saga.  
 Weeping eyes touching  
 music on shining stones