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A NOTE TO MY SISTERS OF THE DIASPORA

by

Fassil Demissie

I thought of writing  
A note, a letter, a book  
400 years ago  
Before the swirling diaspora

Since you left  
That day  
Snatched from our land  
our people  
raped  
Uprooted and humiliated  
By Europe, to be made slaves  
In the fields and factories  
In the mines and as domestics  
Scattered over continents  
in the United States  
in the Caribbean  
in South America

And now  
After 400 years of exploitation  
colonialism  
slavemasters and factory bosses  
sweat  
tears  
Jim Crow laws  
Lynching and murdering  
Reduced to poverty and destitution  
For the profit of others  
To fuel their system of accumulation  
With your blood  
Your childrens labour

You have survived

Who can understand your plight  
Your pain and suffering in  
Sharpeville  
Soweto  
Jim Crow Country

Have others felt the texture of your oppression?  
The scourge of the colonizer  
The juggernaut of apartheid  
The interrogation of the secret police  
torture  
detention  
disappearance  
"accidental" death

Have your friends from Europe tasted these?  
No, No, my sisters of the diaspora  
my beloved  
long separated sisters  
on three continents

We have each faced  
ostrogoths  
visigoths  
conquistadores  
settlers  
pilgrims  
boers/afrikaners  
gangsters  
plunderers  
cowboys  
and Rambos

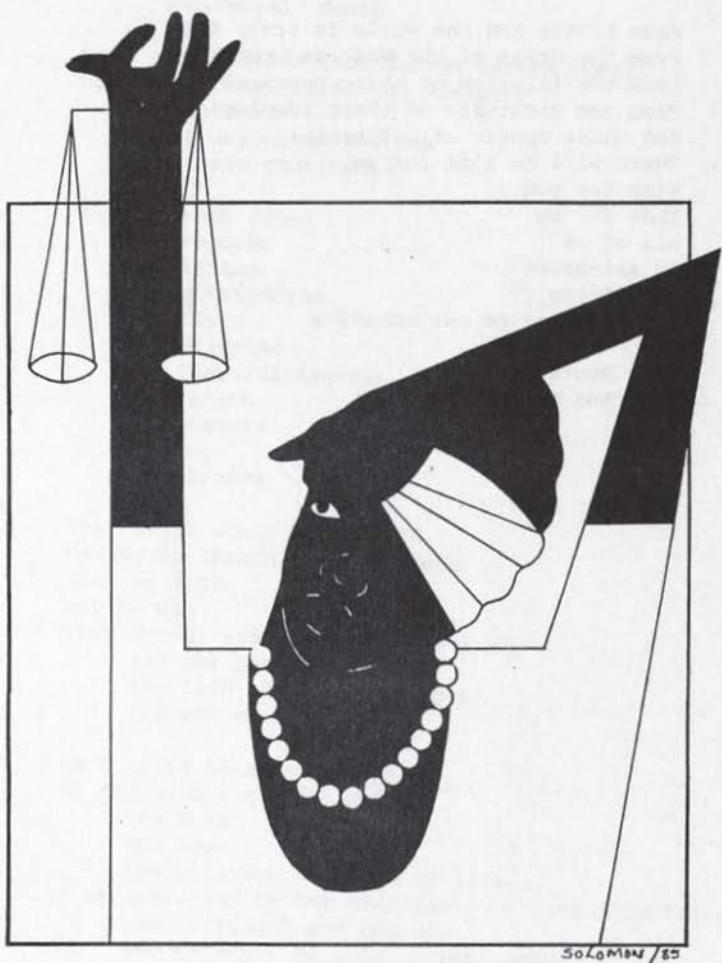
They still stalk this world  
Making it unsafe for everybody  
Inch by inch  
Day by day  
They devour everything in their way  
and the people  
the land and the resources  
and now the heavens

As I write this note to you  
In the shadow of the bomb  
the bomb  
the bomb  
the ultimate negation of life  
I am reassured by the resilience of your life force  
your strength and courage  
the capacity of your determination  
In the struggle

My sisters of the diaspora  
Let us come together and sit  
    in our family compound  
    to sort things out  
    to share a moment  
    to map out the road to freedom

When Africa and the world is truly free  
From the grips of the West and the East  
From the illusion of their promised lands  
From the nightmare of their ideologies  
And their sphere of influence  
There will be time for me  
Time for you  
Time for us  
All of us  
To celebrate  
To rejoice  
The universe of our humanity

Your Brother  
From the Continent



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