

Road Memoir : libretto

EPISODE #8 : "Aftermath"

The Investigator (spoken) :

Her name had been flagged after she was detained at the demonstration. By tagging along to protect her brother she had labelled herself a radical and a danger to the state. When the violence began, those like her - people who still believed and spoke up for freedom and democracy - had been the first to be arrested. If she hadn't been forced to escape when she did she would have probably been arrested again soon after and maybe her fate would have been the same as that of her brother - whose records listed him as missing, presumed dead, when an over-crowded detention centre was torched by rioters.

The Woman (sung) :

We ran for an hour or more.
Away from the killing
In the quiet country lane.
Skirting a village
And stopping only
For the man -
My saviour -
To bandage
My bleeding hands.
Hidden in the deep
Time-darkened hollow
Of an ancient stream bed
We spoke for the first time.

A broken shared language -
Half mine, half his,
Half understood.

As he worked
To clean my wounds,
He tapped his chest, smiled
And said "doctor" and nodded -
As if to remind himself that

Even in this
Collapsing world,
A doctor he remained.

Tying makeshift
Dressings with a
Sad, consoling smile,
Of calm acceptance.

The Investigator (spoken) :

She had unwittingly escaped the city at the same time and in the same direction as a dwindling force of left-wing rebel fighters. Their last stand had come a few miles to the east of her cottage hideaway and from the escarpment behind it she would have been able to witness that battle, in the narrow streets of the medieval town on the plain below.

Leaving the cottage she had entered a congested corner of the war zone. Every person was either fighter or refugee, moving side-by-side, step by step, criss-crossing paths. Caught between army and militia and rebels, it's no wonder that she grabbed at the chance of escape from that hell when it was offered. No wonder she boarded that bus.

The Woman (sung) :

We sat then
In silence.
Shocked.
Exhausted.
Spot-lit by
Leaf-scattered
Sun's rays.
As we absorbed
The weight of all
That we had seen.
The stream playing out
It's absent melody
And the world
Regaining it's axis.

The Investigator (spoken) :

At that time there were three U.N. safe zones in the country but only one lay to the west, 90-odd miles to the west. Wherever it was that she boarded the bus, that had to be where she was headed.

The Woman (sung) :

As the sky turned
From blue to orange,
And nervous of
Standing still
In this predatory land,
We turned south,
Toward the coast.