



GOD IN THE GOBLET

Golden Bengal, what new fruits will your
Fertile fields yield
This year
As a tragic spring descends over
The mourning leaves of the red gulmohor?
What better
Fruits than Muneer, playwright, pioneer
Or Hyder the Tagore-scholar,
Fazle the Physician,
Or the novelist Kaiser? One by one
They were plucked in the hidden
Hours of the night
As the forlorn
City prayed in breathless expectation

Awaiting the dawn
Of liberation
Beneath a horizon torn
By fighter-bombers.
Muneer's mother had stolen
To her prayer-mat, to offer
Tearful thanks to her creator
For her gifted sons
While Muneer, between
Feverish additions to "Dryden
And D. L. Roy," his dissertation
Soothed his wife's fears.
Hyder, the Tagore-scholar
Recited the "Sea gulls" and Kaiser
Had just put his pen down on
The opening chapter



THE MURDERERS CAME

On the orders of a madman
Who had drowned his God in the
goblet
To declare Holy War
Against a people of his own faith.
Between fits of drunken stupor
He had blurted out his desire
To see a race noted for fine
Brains, reduced in number.
So the blow fell on tender
Stems of half-grown
Jute—on lissome women
With fathomless lake-eyes and men
With brilliant records
And a future of brighter hopes.
2
Like proud trees struck down
By lightning Bengal's glory
Was laid low
In swampy ditches; they are now
Amorphous earth; faces
Erased by arsenic.
3
Oh my denuded motherland
What new fruits and flowers this
year?
Your crimson lotuses
And oleanders have fled this bitter
Spring; only a ruby-garland
Of blood-drops,
Only a festival of tears
Can quench the anguish
Of our hearts.
No more shall vernal songs rise
To the air;
No more shall joyous dances
Gladden the greenness
Of young papaya blossoms;
Nor fragrant rice-cakes made
With new corn adorn
The cane-baskets; nor shall the ach-
ing
Tunes from the flute of the village-
lover
Tremble through enchanted
Orchards or the soothing south-
breeze
Ripple among expectant
Mango-groves
Till this offering comes, of tears and
blood-drops.
Oh my motherland, what fruits
But the anger
Of a people tormented far beyond
recorded
Annals of human torture—
So shall the world
Reap the hot Grapes of Wrath, fiercer
This time than the mounting flames
Which burnt to ashes
The proud peaks of Sinai.

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