

Krista Allen
Syford Poetry Contest, Third Place

Let there be peace on Earth

“By violence I mean any way you have of violating the identity and integrity of another person”
-Parker Palmer

To Christianize the nations
we require you look like us,
talk like us, and act like us.
You must embrace capitalism
and a democratic government.
This is the Christian thing to do.

Let there be peace on earth
Let this be the moment now

I come to the Christian nation.
You wear our clothes, an old
T-shirt from a school
over here. You stare at us,
amazed. We are who you want
to be. Well fed and clean.

Let there be peace on earth
Let this be my solemn vow

You stare at us with yellow eyes
and rotting teeth. Your belly protruding
like a latex balloon. Your eyes
are empty like the bowl you
use for food. Let me help
you look like me.

Let there be peace on earth
and let it begin with me

You fled from the country
to escape famine and war.
Your people's lands were
taken that they may be used
to better your nation, with
tall buildings and roads.

Let there be peace on earth

Let this be the moment now

Now your cattle have nowhere to roam.
Your crops cannot grow. Come to the city.
To pursue the great dream and escape
the madness of your home. Enter the city
to be stripped of everything – that you may be me.
Start a roadside stand selling “authentic” Kenyan art.

Let there be peace on earth
Let this be my solemn vow

Kenya was a nation of many tribes
but now it's best if you forget
that. You should have
one language and one name.
Come, we will put you next to
this tribe. No, don't tell me the history.

Let there be peace on earth
and let it begin with me

Dream of brick houses and running water.
A car or two. Work hard and they will be
provided for you. It's been four generations
and here you sit, poorer than before. Get up,
stop being lazy, get out of the muck. Be proud
of your heritage. But, wait who am I?

Let there be peace on earth
Let this be the moment now.
Let there be peace on earth
Let this be my solemn vow.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.